

2013 Golden Jubilee edition

BIHAR YOGA®

The Golden Collection 4

A collection of original publications
from the Bihar Yoga Tradition



Yoga Publications Trust, Munger, Bihar, India

The Golden Collection 4



1963–2013
GOLDEN JUBILEE

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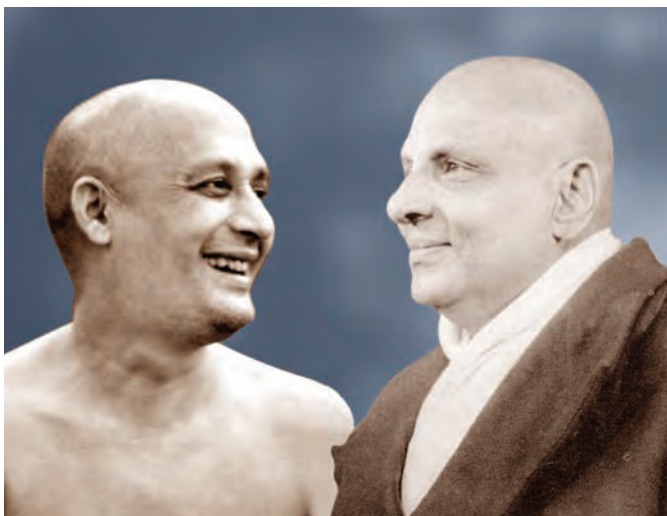
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Dedication

*In humility we offer this dedication to
Swami Sivananda Saraswati, who initiated
Swami Satyananda Saraswati into the secrets of yoga
and to our guru Sri Swami Satyananda Saraswati
who continues to inspire and guide us
on our spiritual journey.*

Swami Niranjan

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Preface

In the early 1970s and 1980s, the devotees of Sri Swami Satyananda carefully printed and published his lectures, discourses and class transcripts in small booklets, preserving and disseminating these important teachings. The booklets were their first contribution to their guru's mission of 'spreading yoga from door to door and shore to shore'. For many years these gems from the past have been out of print and unavailable. On the occasion of the Bihar School of Yoga's Golden Jubilee 2013 celebrations, these lost works have been compiled into a set of volumes aptly named *The Golden Collection*, so that once again the classic words which launched a yoga movement can inspire spiritual aspirants around the world.

In reproducing the booklets the original language has been kept intact, conveying the flavour of the time. The language shows the care that Sri Swami Satyananda took to make his teachings clear to his audience, never compromising clarity for fashion or style. His ability to present and adjust any topic to any audience is proof of the versatility which enabled him to convey his deep understanding of the potential of yoga to meet the needs of all.

A pioneer of his time, Sri Swami Satyananda gave a new dimension to the practice of asana, stating clearly that it can take the practitioner far beyond physical wellbeing. He often guided his disciples through letters brimming with snippets

of wisdom, which are as valuable and pertinent today as they were almost fifty years ago. *The Golden Collection* also includes a systematic introduction to the various meditation practices expounded by Sri Swami Satyananda. No step is missed and no precaution left out, allowing the aspirant to safely travel the journey of yoga and spiritual life. For each practice, whether antar mouna, ajapa japa or nada yoga, precision and clarity are the key. The branches of yoga are concisely elucidated, making them relevant to the daily life of each yoga aspirant.

Much that is taken for granted today was unknown or misunderstood at that time: it is the great achievement of Sri Swami Satyananda to have brought yoga to the general public and mainstream of society, truly making yoga a household word the world over.

The extraordinary quality of his being and spiritual attainments was recognized early in his life. While living in Rishikesh in the ashram of his guru, Swami Sivananda Saraswati, the young swami received glowing appreciation and admiration from guru-bhais, visitors and guests. To this day, tributes continue to express love and a sense of profound gratitude from all who have been touched by this modern day saint and his teachings. Sri Swami Satyananda, however, remained a disciple throughout his life and fulfilled his guru's mandate by making it his life's mission.

The Golden Collection is a true testimony to the wealth and depth of yoga and to its master exponent, Sri Swami Satyananda. In his early teachings he set the tone, purpose and aim of his mission. The reader is able to discover and connect with the roots of Satyananda Yoga, whilst appreciating its evolving contemporary nature, a trademark of this tradition.

Indeed, Sri Swamiji's prophecy, "yoga is the culture of tomorrow", has come true. His tomorrow is our today.



An Introduction to
Tantra Shastra

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



Yoga Publications Trust, Munger, Bihar, India

An introduction by Sri Swami Satyananda to tantra shastra, a dialogue between Shiva and his consort Parvati, saw its first English and Hindi editions in 1969. *Tantra Shastra* is based on lectures given to an International Yoga Assembly in 1967–1968.

Lectures on the Gita

Delivered by
Vishnuprasad V. Baxi, MA

Under the guidance of
Swami Satyananda Saraswati



Yoga Publications Trust, Munger, Bihar, India

Lectures on the Gita is a compilation of five talks delivered by Vishnuprasad V. Baxi, MA, during the First All-India Yoga Convention, held from 2nd to 7th November 1964, at the Goenka Dharamshala in Munger. The Convention was inaugurated by the Governor of Bihar, Sri Anand Shyanam Iyengar. As a further honour, the convention received Swami Chidananda of Rishikesh as its chief guest.

V. V. Baxi

Vishnuprasad Venilal Baxi (1905–1993) held various Government posts in India. A learned Sanskrit scholar, V. V. Baxi was keenly interested in yoga – both as a practitioner and philosopher. He was very close to Sri Swamiji and devoted considerable time to the International Yoga Fellowship Movement in its foundational days.

The Liberated Man

Nineteen vital slokas of Samkhya Yoga
from lectures on the *Bhagavad Gita*

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



Yoga Publications Trust, Munger, Bihar, India

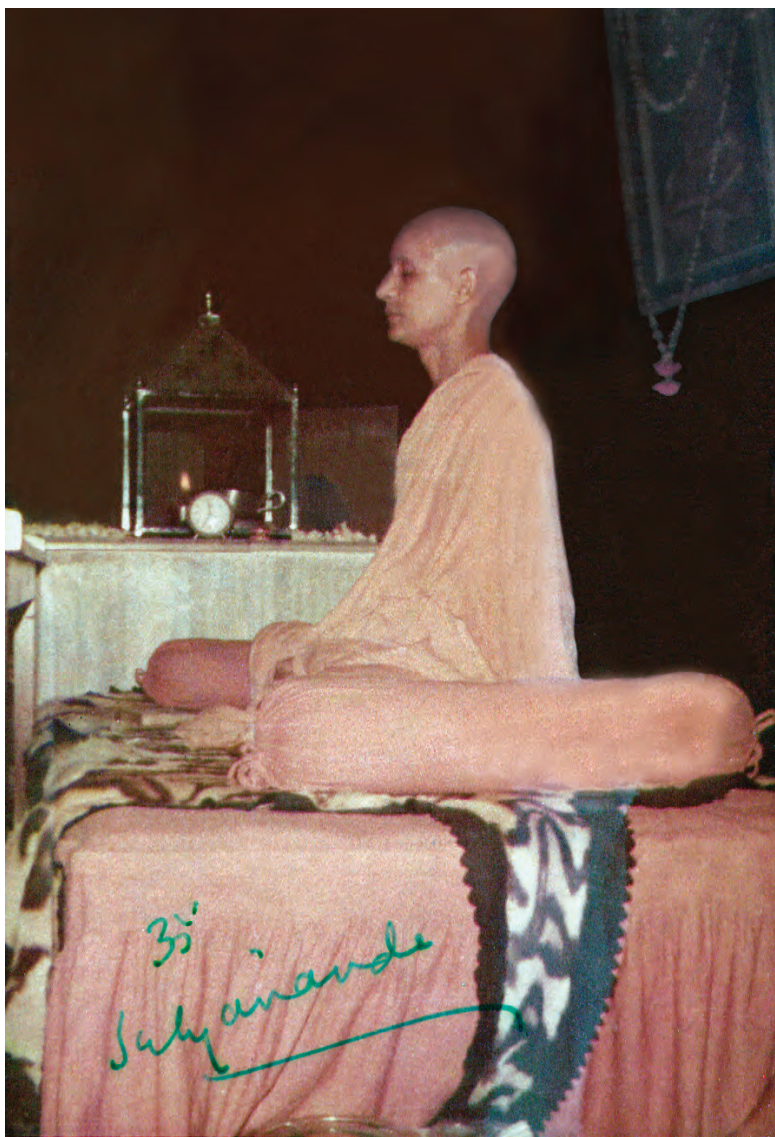
The following three commentaries on the *Bhagavad Gita* were delivered by Swami Satyananda to the students of the twenty-nation International Yoga Teachers' Training Course. This nine-month course was held from 1st July 1967 to 31st March 1968 at Bihar School of Yoga, Munger, Bihar.

The Liberated Man is an interpretation of nineteen slokas from chapter two of the *Bhagavad Gita*. It was published to commemorate the global tour of Sri Swami Satyananda from April to August 1968.

Swami Yogeshwarananda Saraswati (compiler)

In June 1967 Swami Yogeshwarananda (The Netherlands) came to Munger to join the nine-month International Yoga Teachers Training course held from July 1967 to March 1968. On 2nd November 1967 she was initiated into sannyasa. Everyone was amazed at the remarkable quickness with which she assimilated not only the fundamentals but also the deep-rooted philosophies of yoga. She dedicated her life to yoga and the welfare of humankind.

Swami Yogeshwarananda compiled *The Liberated Man and Wisdom of Gita*.



SWAMI SATYANANDA SARASWATI
– harbinger of the psychic race

Wisdom of the Gita

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



Yoga Publications Trust, Munger, Bihar, India

First published in 1968, *Wisdom of the Gita* is a compilation of notes on the last eight slokas of the twelfth chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita* arising from the daily lessons on the *Bhagavad Gita* given to students by Swami Satyananda “for whom words are not enough to express the deep devotion they all cherish for him.”

The Three Qualities:
Trigunas

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



Yoga Publications Trust, Munger, Bihar, India

The Three Qualities: Trigunas consists of lectures delivered on Samkhya philosophy and the *Bhagavad Gita* to the trainees of the International Teachers' Training Course held in Munger from 1967–1968. It elucidates in an easy and clear way sloka by sloka the whole of chapter fourteen of the *Bhagavad Gita*.

Samadhi

A study on Rishi Patanjali's concept of samadhi

Upendra Baxi, BA, LLM

Under the guidance of
Swami Satyananda Saraswati



Yoga Publications Trust, Munger, Bihar, India

Published in March 1965, *Samadhi* is a scholarly interpretation of Sage Patanjali's concept of samadhi. Referring to the *Yoga Sutras*, Sri Upendra Baxi, former Vice-Chancellor, University of Delhi, presents his understanding while quoting extensively other sources and scholars.

Upendra Baxi

Upendra Baxi, Emeritus Professor, University of Warwick and Delhi, has been Vice-Chancellor at the University of Delhi and South Gujarat University. Baxi, a professor of law, has taught jurisprudence in Delhi, Australia, United Kingdom, USA and Canada. His most notable publications include *The Future of Human Rights* and *Human Rights in a Post Human World*. He was awarded the Padma Shri in 2011.

His association with Sri Swamiji and the Bihar School of Yoga dates back to his formative years, when he started his career in Bombay.

An Introduction to
Tantra Shastra

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



Yoga Publications Trust, Munger, Bihar, India

An introduction by Sri Swami Satyananda to tantra shastra, a dialogue between Shiva and his consort Parvati, saw its first English and Hindi editions in 1969. *Tantra Shastra* is based on lectures given to an International Yoga Assembly in 1967–1968.

Publisher's Note

For generations of misunderstood, misconceived explanations and superstitious definitions attached to the tantric teachings, it is in the name of evolution we offer an introduction to tantra shastra, a science of self-realization for all, condensed from class lectures by Paramahansa Satyananda Saraswati, given to the International Yoga Assembly 1967–1968.

Herein, the reader will find a clear explanation of the origin and purpose of tantra shastra, how it developed into different traditions and its significance and value in the modern societies of today.

An internationally known yogic figure and guru, noted for his fearless spirit, impressive orations, overflowing love for all, steady wisdom and unsurpassed knowledge of the Vedas and modern science draws only a vague sketch of Paramahansa Satyananda Saraswati.

This commentary is a direct reflection of Swamiji's unique ability to expose and reveal the eternal treasures and truths, which are so often misinterpreted and hidden in the blind concepts and traditions of the society.

In this book Swamiji presents refreshing, interesting and knowledgeable explanations for this living science for self-realization.

Part I

Tantra shastra is a sacred and most powerful science in the Indian occult tradition. It is a science which Indians have practised for centuries and still do. Although this science was subject to varieties of suppression from time to time, due to misunderstandings and allegations, it still lives through accidents and subjugations by dint of its original operation and method of discovery of the psychic realms.

Tantra shastra as a whole is the system which deals with the techniques, mediums and applications concerning the individual power and knowledge which is said to be at the depth of human consciousness.

Usually it is thought that only a sannyasin or a recluse, or a celibate, *brahmacharin*, or a total renunciate can be in possession of psychic powers and that an ordinary householder has no access to those powers which belong to deeper planes of consciousness. But tantra shastra proclaims boldly that neither food nor character, nor social relationship, nor marital nor emotional life stand in the way of developing such superpowers. While one section propagated the exclusive cult of renunciation in order to develop such powers of higher consciousness, the other believed that the normal progressions of life never presented any hindrance in the path of awakening the deeper awareness. It is this section which we find gradually evolving into tantra marga while the first developed into the cult of yoga.

In tantra shastra one will find every practice intercoiled, combined and adjusted with the attitudes and behaviours of an average person. There is a compelling note to follow the natural steps of life. Therefore, wine, meat, marital relations, mantras and fish are accepted in the general constitution of the shastra. Much misunderstood, this compelling constitution of tantra shastra clarifies in bold terms that use of the above does not at all present any obstacle to the awakening of shakti, rather it helps.

In bhakti shastra also, the normal progression of life and the demands of nature are not at all denied, rather they are combined and adjusted with life. In the light of this, if one looks in the tantra shastra, one will find that it is a happy combination of occult techniques and devotional attitudes. As such it is absolutely necessary that along with occult rituals and ceremonies, the practitioner should also surrender himself to *Shakti* – the divine power.

Worship of Shakti

The presiding deity of tantra shastra is Devi, the so-called feminine deity, unto whom all mantras, mudras and other elements of worship are devotionally dedicated. The act of bathing, dressing, sitting for worship, offering various stuffs, sacrificing an animal, cohabiting with the husband or wife or companion, accepting the offered foodstuffs and many other acts are performed in the spirit of total dedication and devoted offering. The sixty-four tantras are thus designed to suit variegated temperaments and individuals walking, faltering and advancing on different scales of evolution.

The purpose of all tantric systems is one, and that is to evolve and express the *Matri*-aspect, motherly aspect, which is probably the nucleus and centre of total consciousness in living beings. The mother aspect denotes the central sphere of individualized awareness which is *shakti* or energy. The tantra shastras do not get confused in the so-called material instinct, nor is their purpose to develop the emotional

mother complex. The term 'Matri' symbolizes the greatest power in man, not only the mother in the emotional sense.

'Tantrics are worshippers of Shakti', should be the proper expression, even in the case of those who worship Shiva or Vishnu. What is Shakti? Shakti is the great process lying almost restless at the deepest sphere of individual consciousness capable of creation, progression and destruction. It is that powerful awareness in man which is lying dormant at present.

Where is this Shakti? It is in all. It is the left half of Shiva. Shiva is prana. Shakti is energy. Shiva is tongue and Shakti is the power of speech. Shiva and Shakti live and move together, but Shiva cannot materialize himself into actions and things without the active cooperation of and in conjunction with Shakti. Therefore, Shakti is the subject matter of tantra shastra, whether in Shakti tantra or in shaiva tantra. Though Shakti is depicted by a feminine frame, termed as a Goddess, depicted as a beautiful lady, the tantras unanimously declare that Shakti is an all-pervading and all-embracing existence, in a saint and in a sinner, in a man and in a woman, in a believer and in a non-believer.

Tantric sadhana

Tantra shastra also has an elaborate scheme and a definite scheme of manifesting this transcendental existence in every individual by mantras, yantras, devata, kriyas, mudras and including the most abused five ingredients of tantra. Those elaborate and definite schemes of tantra are employed to develop the deeper individual awareness on the outer plane so that supra-physical faculties can be brought into action. Mantras are meant to create systematic vibrations, yantras are meant to consolidate the energy and kriyas are to awaken the psychic centres in man.

Tantra sadhana can be said to be one of the ways of awakening the kundalini. It is a powerful method, and therefore, there is always a possibility of misuse of those powers. The other methods are tedious, strenuous, time-

consuming and too far fetched; there is practically no possibility of misuse of the powers arising by the methods other than tantra. Man does not have the patience to wait that long for the desired awakening; so most of them leave their practices half way. Since tantra sadhana is direct, immediate, convenient, unrigid and palatable, the practitioner achieves instantaneous success in it. Therefore, tantra sadhana is a living science in India, not at all obsolete, never dead. There are centres for initiation for serious minded aspirants where tantra sadhana is taught. It is practised in absolute secrecy by various groups under the guidance of their own tradition.



Part II

The word 'tantra' is a combination of twofold processes, namely, 'tanoti' and 'trayati', meaning expansion and liberation. The root 'tan' stands for the word 'tanoti' and the root 'tra' stands for the word 'trayati'. The word *tanoti* means to stretch, to extend, to elaborate, to eliminate and the like. The word *trayati* means to liberate, to free, to separate and the like. So it is clear that tantra is a process of expansion and finally absolute freedom to the highest existence.

Tantras are purely vedic in origin. You can conveniently put them into two progressive categories of shruti and smriti. Accordingly, they are to be termed as shrouta tantras and smarta tantras, which respectively mean the tantras strictly according to the vedic tradition and the tantras according to the changing social structure. Tantras that have their existence in shruti, and who obey shruti implicitly are shrouta tantras, while those tantras having all respect for shruti, but adjusting with the ever-shifting social concepts are known as smarta tantras.

The shrouta tantras, the vedic tantras, were replete with an absolute sense of purity and orthodoxy. As a result, there developed a tradition of absolute cleanliness or ahimsa and the like. However, those who were used to performing animal sacrifices and such other older customs did not agree to this concept of orthodox purity or ahimsa. Thus the vedic tantras were naturally divided in the course of time into two

groups. Out of them one may be termed vedic tantra, which followed the path of ahimsa, and the other which followed the traditions of animal sacrifices and the like. However, during those days, they did not use the word 'tantra', but they used the word 'yajna'. It was only in the latter period that yajna came to be replaced by the word tantra. Later on, these natural divisions of vedic tantra developed into two main currents, namely shakta tantra and shaiva tantra.

Due to the pressure of repeated criticism of the act of sacrifice and the use of wine, etc., it became necessary for the followers of shakta tantra to evolve a spiritual philosophy for providing the propriety and effectiveness of their system. This division of tantra also developed into two distinct creeds – one accepting animal sacrifices, wine, etc., and the other continuing the older orthodox customs. They were shaivas and shaktas, worshippers of Shiva and Shakti respectively.

Shaktas and shaivas

However, shaivas who rallied around Shiva lived an austere life, which however was not enjoined in the original vedic tantra. They also refrained from sacrifices, wine, etc., which was accepted by popular traditions of shaktas. Whereas shaivas developed their system of tantra around the concept of Shiva, shaktas continued their system around the concept of Shakti, they lived a life of comfort and luxury like the vedic worshippers and pursued the path of sacrifice, wine, etc. Thus the main stream of tantra was divided into three.

1. The refined vedic worship which is widely practised in India even today in the form of yajnas, rudri and other forms of karmakanda rituals.
2. The shaiva tantra which systematically developed around this central conception of Lord Shiva, with austerity as its backbone, yoga its creed, renunciation its policy and samadhi as its summum bonum; worshippers of this cult can be seen among all sections of Hindus. There are twelve main centres besides many more temples

where shaiva tantra is practised in the form of a daily ceremony.

3. The shakta tantra, which was a kind of original vedic tantra, later developed into a classical system of worship of Shakti. However, they did not discontinue the primitive tradition of sacrifices, wine, honey, marital or extra-marital cohabitation and occult mantras. There are sixty-four main centres, *shaktipeethas*, besides numerous temples where shakta tantra is practised in the form of daily as well as occasional ceremonies. There are also sixty-four tantric texts belonging to this stream.

Right and left tantra

It is this tantric tradition which again divides itself into left and right tantra, or *vama tantra* and *dakshina tantra*. Why and how did this division take place? One cannot belong purely to one creed; one is always influenced by the thoughts next-door. Likewise, shaktas and shaivas who lived together were influenced by each other. It could be that narrow-minded shaktas also realized the glory, purity, nobility and grace of the shaiva system, whose highlights were austerity, purity, samadhi and yoga. As a result they worshipped Shakti with a spirit of shaiva and refrained from meat, etc. They became the practitioners of right hand tantra.

In other words the original theme of tantra sadhana was accepted, but modified by them on account of the relation developed with other creeds. So the shaktas felt that it was possible for them to live a life of austerity, purity, etc., while following their traditional system of worship. They were the shaktas in the right sense.

Nevertheless, there remained other shaktas who did not accept the above mentioned influence and remained absolutely sceptical of the said influence. They continued their usual practices and were known as the leftist or vama panthi.

Yet, there were those shaivas who were also influenced by the beliefs and behaviour of shaktas and felt it was

meaningless to do austerity and yoga practices, when the gain was easily obtainable through animal sacrifices, etc. So they combined Devi worship in their system, because in it they found the fulfilment of emotions and ambitions. Since worshippers of Shiva were not supposed to practise animal sacrifice, etc., they accepted Shakti worship also side by side and followed the traditions of shakta tantra.

Reinterpretation of tantric philosophy

This is the historical stream as to how the right and left tantra sadhanas came to be developed in the structure of society. The development was spontaneous, though subjected to organization in the course of time. Different creeds were organized, but the central purpose remained ever the same – it was the awakening of something in man which was unknown but not unheard of. It is true that there might have been people who joined the creed without any spiritual purpose, but such people were very few. Most people in India joined these different traditions with a definite purpose of awakening the sleeping power and harnessing it for a higher purpose. From time to time each and every system underwent changes and adjustments with reference to the ceremonies and original elements of worship. While the reference to animal sacrifice, etc., was literally accepted in older traditions, in later traditions it came to mean a process of sacrificing the animal in man. Thus came the re-interpretation of tantric philosophy.

Here wine did not mean anything else except that amrit which is internally produced through certain occult methods. Again maithuna did not mean anything like cohabitation as is generally understood; here it means an act or a state of union between the individual and the collective consciousness, *jivatman* and *Paramatman*. Thus the whole picture changes.

Furthermore, mantra did not mean the vedic mantras, the audible pronouncements; mantra came to be understood as a process of contemplation on the occult sound in

order to break through the fetters of the lower phases of consciousness. The root 'man' means a process of contemplation. The root 'tra' means freedom, liberation, elimination, release and the like. So *mantra* came to mean a process of chanting certain syllables in a particular way in order to bring about the fusion of empirical existence with the transcendental existence.

And what is honey? Certainly not from the beehive; it is the essence of life and that is prana, which is an all-pervading essence and substratum of existence.

Thus the entire philosophy of tantra undergoes a process of sublimation. Although you will not find any change in the mantra which recites "I offer this animal," here there is always the attitude of sacrificing the animal instinct in human awareness. Herein, Lord Shiva becomes *Pashupati*, which means master of the animals. While the worshipper chants the mantra of sacrifice, he becomes aware of the possibility of mastering the animal awareness. Here, killing the animal is not taken literally, but is understood as a process of transcendence of awareness of animal life.

How to kill that animal and how to transcend the lower awareness? Is it possible that one can soar high in spiritual life without suppressing the natural life which one has developed through the course of evolution? It is for this man that the tantra sadhana comes as a true lifeboat. It does not ask anyone to deny the natural demands of life; you have to spiritualize them and thus exhaust the samskaras. If you cannot give up your old habit of drinking, it does not matter, you just continue that as a ingredient of your tantric worship.

A non-ethical system

People in general are intellectually ethical. This is the condition in every part of the world. The intellect is clouded by the so-called ethics of the world. At the same time everyone is violating this philosophy. A large percentage of the world is always indulging in what it considers to be

unethical and immoral, and consequently everyone without exception is suffering from self-imagined agonies. This is where psychological and psychosomatic diseases have their origin.

Tantra advises, why consider them immoral and unethical, and why not accept them and spiritualize them? When you know that everybody is leading a particular kind of life and is indulging in wine, women, meat eating, etc., what is the use of asking them to renounce everything, either for fear of hell or for the sake of heaven. It is sure that neither the fear of hell or the craving for heaven can make one renounce the pleasures of life, rather it creates conflicts and psychological cobwebs in the personality of man. The point is how one should utilize these and other natural expressions of individual consciousness for higher awakening. It is tantra shastra which has definite methods, techniques and rules for practising the fivefold items, unknown to many mystic traditions in the annals of ancient and modern history.

Professional teachers of ethics and morality, self-styled preachers and devotees of ahimsa, will never accept this view of tantra, but it is absolutely proven: that every man, to which ever weakness he is given, has equal or more opportunities for the development of his spiritual power.

The frailties of man should become a part of his spiritual life and practice. Not only tantrics, but all those householders who managed with the natural expressions of life finally abandoned and became totally free. Therefore, one should not be asked to renounce his weaknesses and hate part of his personality; rather he should be asked to practise tantric worship and develop himself spiritually. Such a man will march through tantra sadhana and sooner or later find himself on the path of yoga. This is what everybody wants.

Lord Shiva has explained tantra to Parvati. Various elements of the tantra shastra are well-defined. In the course of practice awakening takes place. Surely there is no question of getting oneself qualified for such awakening.

Elements of tantra

There is a great similarity between tantra shastra and yoga shastra; in both you will find reference to asanas, mudras, bandhas, chakras and dharana, kriya yoga, kundalini yoga, hatha yoga, mantra yoga, jnana yoga are parts of tantra shastra. In the sixty-four tantras there are hundreds of such methods meant for highly developed and also for undeveloped people. Each tantra can be said to have been created to suit a limited number of temperaments.

The tantra sadhanas are not meant for those who are self-realized. They were written for those people who have to live a normal life, are predominately instinctive, and who are unable to shake off anything of like.

There are written tantras as well as unwritten tantras. Written tantras number sixty-four, but unwritten tantras are oral by tradition and are only taught to those disciples in whom the guru finds infinite understanding and a few more simple qualifications. Even today, there are such teachers in India, who are well-versed in this oral system of tantra and who keep passing this great knowledge through their disciple or disciples. It is this traditional oral system which is more powerful, portable and easily available, but it is not an easy task to discover the teachers of this oral tantric system.

Tantra sadhana provides its devotees with a very systematic, scientific and psychologically formulated method of worship of Purusha and Prakriti, in the microcosmos as well as in the macrocosmos. Purusha and Prakriti are not different from Shiva and Shakti. It need not be reiterated that the concept of Shiva and Shakti represents the spiritual and physical energies, lying latent in matter as well as in the cosmos.

Methods of worship

Tantric worship is a kind of ritual in which various aspects of reality are accepted. It is the general belief that the worship of those deities creates great receptivity and awakening in the psychic world of man, and thereby the worshipper receives

abundant blessings. Herein, the science of mantras is so precise and scientific that it creates the awakening in the psychic fields. Therefore, mantra shastra is the foundation of tantra shastra. The various provinces which are lying in the inner space of man are always in tune with those vibrations, which a powerful mantra is capable of creating. Therefore, a mantra which belongs to the tantric tradition may or may not have any intelligent meaning, but is capable of piercing through the various states of psychic consciousness.

The method of worship in tantra is not only devotional, it is a pre-planned method so much so that the worshipper has to remain conscious of those minute rituals at every step; as such he cannot manage to perform the worship mechanically. The process of guiding the awareness is fully defined and you cannot manage to remain unconscious of what you are doing. One has to employ mantras, mudras, bhavana and kriyas during the practice. Therefore, the method of worship brings a state of fineness in the structure of the individual awareness.

Tantric worship does not begin in the temple, nor does it end there. It begins the moment you rise up from your bed, and every action thereafter is guided by the rules of tantra. During the process of worship, every item of tantra is brought into active operation. At the end of the worship, the aspirant meditates on Shiva and Shakti.

Even the meditation is a guided meditation. It is not a meditation as most people do. It is absolutely a guided meditation, and therefore, the tantric sadhaka has a greater facility to overcome the problems of the mind. He does not have to think of the next step and naturally the intellect is made to retire. This is a very important event in spiritual life. Yogic consciousness cannot at all emerge out of intellectual strangulations. The guru and tantra alone help one to come out of these intellectual strangulations.

The entire schedule of meditation helps the individual to practise meditation for long hours. It is only when the intellect and the thinking process are used in meditation that

the aspirant is unable to continue his meditation for long hours. While tantric worship guides the individual awareness into deeper spheres, the puranic method only inspires him to meditation, and does not provide any guidance for the awareness to function in higher provinces. When you meditate on a particular deity, you need a schedule for the individual awareness to follow without any intellectual process involved in the matter.

Again the yantras and mantras are so designed that they are able to create an image and excite the movement in psychic fields. These elements of tantra guide the awareness into different planes of consciousness.

Tantric guru

A lot has been said about the necessity of a guru on the path of yoga. On the path of tantra sadhana, a guru is the first and indispensable element. Selection of a guru is the first and foremost item in tantra sadhana. In tantra shastra, there are discussions on a feminine guru, family guru and other gurus. The feminine guru is considered powerful. Wherever there is a custom of traditional tantric initiation, the mother becomes the initiating guru. This tradition of initiation is very popular in certain parts of Bihar, where the mother becomes the guru of the tradition.

For the fulfilment of any tantric worship, initiation from a woman guru (Bhairavi) is to be sought; tantric initiation by Bhairavi is a powerful initiation. However, the problem remains. Selection of a guru for tantric initiation is really a difficult job, for the simple reason that such gurus do not make themselves known at all. Therefore, initiation into tantra depends upon the guru, while the disciple only has to prepare himself. When the guru feels that the disciple is ready, then he initiates the disciple into tantric traditions. As such, the problem of finding a proper guru for tantric sadhana should not arise at all.

If the tantric guru is a sannyasin, so much the better, but a householder guru also fulfils the need. What is wanted in a

tantric guru is for him to live the life of an average man. All other qualifications of a guru are not essential except that he should be proficient in his art and never use the powers for evil purposes.

Although a married householder has the authority to impart the knowledge, it should not mean that one can become a guru just because he is a householder. Since a householder is accepted as a responsible member of society and has a greater understanding of the average man, he is also allowed to act as a guru, provided he knows the science.

In India, Brahmins who know this art and give initiation, just live the life of an average householder; but one must remember very well that the married life of a householder and that of a Brahmin, and still more that of a spiritually minded Brahmin is glorious, well-planned and self-controlled. There is a great gulf of difference in ideals, outlooks, practices and results of the married life of a Hindu from that of an average Westerner. Even if such a guru has married two wives, there is nothing wrong. The Hindu shastras give sanction to such marriages in extraordinary cases where the question of progeny is involved, but such a guru devotes himself fully to the practices of tantra sadhana while he has disciples to take care of his material needs.

Sadhana in the burial ground

Sometimes a very ugly picture of a tantric is drawn with a human skull, etc., sitting in a burial ground without any clothes, with drunken women. Well, all this never happens in tantric worship. In fact, tantra is far from this. The above mentioned ugly picture does not enjoy any sanction from tantra shastra.

Witchcraft should also not be mistaken for tantric systems, although the practitioner of tantra may develop certain powers. Since the cemetery and burial grounds, lonely forests and midnight hours are good for silent and uninterrupted meditation, because they are absolutely quiet and peaceful, the tantra shastra advises such places for worship and

meditation. When the mind is given an atmosphere, the mental tendencies become much quieter. In deeper states of meditation, when the conscious mind loses its grip over the autonomic system, the inherent fear springs up and there is an explosion of psychic contents in the form of the collective unconscious. Even as situations in life are able to stimulate the lower psyche in individuals, likewise, the solitude, quiet and mysterious atmosphere of the burial ground or cemetery is able to develop the mystic and occult tendencies of one's deeper personality.

There is no better place in the world for meditation than in the burial ground, where the mind as a whole develops the awareness of fleeting life, meaningless efforts, awareness of death and many more valuable realizations.

Sometimes the aspirant uses wine in order to eliminate the first phase of fear; but it is a ceremony in order to stimulate the mind and brain to be able to dive deep into one's own self.

When you practise worship in the burial ground, it is not only this much. You have to practise the whole initiation in that heightened mental state for hours together and try to disassociate the psyche from the matter in different phases of awareness. When the consciousness of the aspirant dives deep into various layers of individual consciousness, then it has to overcome fears, forms, images, schizophrenia and finally establish itself in a state of tranquillity. When the tremendous collective unconscious becomes manifest, the ego is separated from matter and the thing is seen face to face just like the reality. With this, one phase of sadhana ends.

The use of wine, sitting in the burial ground and placing a human skull does not make one a siddha, but one can utilize them to the best of one's spiritual advantage.

Cohabitation versus brahmacharya

Cohabitation, whether marital or extramarital is not an essential part of tantra; you can practise tantra with your wife if you have one, with another companion if so,

otherwise without anyone if you are brahmacharin. Hindu marriage is a dharma, as much as brahmacharya is a great accomplishment. While a married householder fulfils a great dharma, a brahmacharin attains the highest state of existence.

Marital union is not unholy, yet it pricks the conscience; how then can one practise tantra when both acts are to be performed at night? How can one overcome the feeling of guilt and nervousness due to excitement? Therefore, the practitioner of tantra will have to spiritualize the marital act and make it an item of his tantric worship so that he remains free from the emotional concomitants of the act. Wise people included the actual marital act in the scheme of tantra in order to avoid guilt complexes, animal nervousness, psychological aftereffects, forgetfulness of the spiritual purpose and finally to establish a deeper bond of union between husband and wife in the psychological, social and spiritual fields. That is why maithuna is not outside of tantra, but is included in the scheme. Since it opens certain portions of the posterior pituitary and removes toxins stored in the sexual organs and elsewhere, it should not be considered unspiritual or anything like this. One should have a different understanding about beliefs and truth.

The practice of tantra is done at different periods. At night, in the early morning, at home, in the burial ground, in the company of one's wife, with other companions, or alone. It all depends on the evolution of the practitioner. While the beginner may be asked to perform worship at night with his wife, later on he and his wife may have to do the whole thing individually and live the life of spontaneous brahmacharya.

Brahmacharya is not renounced by tantra, rather it is enjoined, however, not quickly; it comes in stages. When one is established in spontaneous brahmacharya, then one is allowed to practise one's worship in the burial ground or in any other such place. After that one is allowed to practise in the morning hours when there is absolute steadiness in the

atmosphere as well as in the mind. Here husband and wife have to practise the worship individually.

Tantric worship in burial grounds, *shmashan sadhana*, is enjoined for women also. It is not a collective worship in company with husband or wife; one has to practise *shmashan sadhana* individually. Morning worship of tantra is enjoined for husband and wife, but they have to practise it individually. The preliminary worship for husband and wife, guru and disciple, male and female companions is enjoined for both which they have to practise together.

So a tantric is not one with a hideous face, a dirty appearance, wearing deep red clothes, with bloodshot eyes and a terrifying personality. Those who have this image in their minds are ignorant people. A real tantric is a saintly personality. They are yogis who are practising yoga in a different way for the development of that spiritual power which is hidden away under layers and layers of ego. Theirs is a much easier way, a way which most can walk upon. The tantric system has come to be misused and abused because misinformed people have developed vague and false images of a tantric and impostors are exploiting their self-styled definition of a tantric.

A natural process of self-realization

If I could tell you the details of tantric worship, the definition of deities, the science of mantras, the psychic capacity of bija mantras with their use, the methods of meditation, the place, time and companions of worship, then you would at once understand that tantric *sadhana* is so powerful that not only the vagrant mind can be brought under control, but the higher elements of consciousness can also be brought under subjugation by any man.

Shiva and Shakti have individual as well as collective existence. They are the supreme awareness in every being. A complete manifestation of Shiva and Shakti is termed as *samadhi* by yogis, whereas Vaishnavas term it as *Vishnu darshan*.

Shiva is unqualified awareness in every being and Shakti is the matter, holding and manifesting this awareness. Shakti is directing the three gunas so individual awareness is functioning. Shakti is maya and avidya. When the worshipper is propitiating Shakti, he is actually progressing through the process of pratyahara, that is, the withdrawal of sense awareness. The process of cessation of the modifications of individual consciousness is complete when the awareness of Shakti becomes revealed.

The state of higher consciousness as capitulated by a yogi is easily obtainable by the process of Shakti worship. The whole of tantra sadhana is therefore a process of realization of the highest in man. Other paths are not natural to the practitioner and demand from him austerity, abstention, and the like. Tantra shastra is the easiest because it does not ask one to renounce what is natural, but guides one to sublimate even the lowest urges of life and express the utterly insignificant.

Vedanta is a sublime philosophy, but it is purely intellectual. Even the practices of jnana yoga are negative, pessimistic, egoistic and purely mental. Raja yoga is a complete system, but makes a lot of impossible demands on an average individual, so much so that it produces numerous introverts, neurotics and inhibited personalities. Though it is an incomparable path, it lacks understanding of the average man. Bhakti yoga is the easiest path, but the problem is that it has no systematic blueprint of inner evolution and is filled with impossible concepts of ethics, purity, orthodoxy and incorrigible arrogance.

However, the whole of tantra sadhana is a smooth way for everyone, which does not lay down a list of don'ts. It has practices for each individual walking on different points of evolution. Whether vegetarian or non-vegetarian, whether a brahmacharin or living normally, whether high-born or a simple man, whether for moksha or for siddhis, whether selfish or unselfish, it is tantra shastra that gives you a way for yourself. Even sannyasins can practise tantra sadhana

and develop higher powers and utilize them for the good of mankind. Maha nirvana tantra is the tantra for sannyasins, brahmacharins and hermits.

Still there are hundreds of ill-informed individuals who think that tantric initiation or practice compulsorily demands the five elements. For those the message is that tantra shastra is for them also. All those who have not succeeded in their sadhana, even though years have elapsed, should accept the tantric way of realization. In the Kali Yuga, when minds are no more pure, habits have degenerated, passions have burst out, faith in God is just a habit and life has become completely different, verily it is tantra that is the way for spiritually aspiring souls of both the East and West.



The keynote of tantra shastra is very simple. Wherever you are, wherever you stand, whichever is the point of your evolution today, from that point you can start walking towards spiritual experience. Everybody is connected with the universe, related to the whole cosmos. Therefore, to have a higher experience you do not have to make a shift in your life.

There is nothing noble or ignoble, nothing good or bad in life, everything is a stepping stone. Some are sinners, some saints, some are running after carnal pleasure, some after money, wife and children, but all are going towards that higher experience.

—Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Lectures on the Gita

Delivered by
Vishnuprasad V. Baxi, MA

Under the guidance of
Swami Satyananda Saraswati



Yoga Publications Trust, Munger, Bihar, India

Lectures on the Gita is a compilation of five talks delivered by Vishnuprasad V. Baxi, MA, during the First All-India Yoga Convention, held from 2nd to 7th November 1964, at the Goenka Dharamshala in Munger. The Convention was inaugurated by the Governor of Bihar, Sri Anand Shyanam Iyengar. As a further honour, the convention received Swami Chidananda of Rishikesh as its chief guest.

V. V. Baxi

Vishnuprasad Venilal Baxi (1905–1993) held various Government posts in India. A learned Sanskrit scholar, V. V. Baxi was keenly interested in yoga – both as a practitioner and philosopher. He was very close to Sri Swamiji and devoted considerable time to the International Yoga Fellowship Movement in its foundational days.

Publishers Note

The first annual function of Bihar School of Yoga, Munger, was holding an All-India Yoga Convention from 1 to 7 November 1964. It was a historic convention and the first of its kind in the history of yogic conventions.

Over seven hundred delegates from all parts of the country, representing all walks of life participated in its weeklong deliberations. Scholars and politicians, top-ranking officers of Government and mahatmas addressed the gathering during its three sessions each day. The life and soul of the convention was, however, Paramahansa Swami Satyananda Saraswati, whose addresses, delivered in gentle, persuasive and eloquent manner, were its highlights.

This booklet contains a summary of five lectures delivered by Sri V.V. Baxi during the afternoon sessions from 2nd to 6th November. Mr. Baxi is one of the chief disciples of Swamiji and is a keen student of the *Bhagwad Gita*. These lectures were very much appreciated.

—March 1965, Munger
K. K. Goenka, Secretary, BSY

1

The Basis of Discord in the Mind of Arjuna

2 November 1964

Centuries ago there occurred in the history of humanity, an event which finds no parallel anywhere in any history, both for the tragic intensity of the situation in which the hero, torn by conflicts of divergent emotions hesitated to follow the path of duty and also for the supreme mastery with which spiritual instruction was used as a lever to lift the man, sinking in the morass of despair to the solid ground of reality and to fight the battle. The situation which was full of dramatic irony and pathos was of so serious a nature that had it not been resolved, the crisis that threatened to set at naught the life of a single individual in a high station of life would have spelled disaster for the entire humanity.

In the grim and terrible reality of the field of battle, the hero of the Mahabharata war, Arjuna, was the victim of this crisis of confidence, this crisis of character. It was a tragic moment, for there can be no tragedy greater than the tragedy where the hero placed in a high historical setting, in a moment of weakness is ready to throw away the ideals of righteousness and justice upon which humanity survives. There can be no tragedy more colossal than the tragedy of fallen ideals and such a tragedy was ready to be enacted on the field of battle on that memorable occasion. The tragedy arose out of a conflict of divergent emotions.

Since ages, the conflicts abiding in the human heart have been the subject matter of all great literatures, but there the literary writer contents himself with depicting in a touching manner the turmoil in the soul of the hero and the heroine and leaves them to their fate. Such was the tragedy that haunted Lady John, Macbeth, Hamlet and Brutus whose soul 'suffered in the nature of an insurrection'. Shakespeare depicts with touching pathos those conflicts which eat into the vitals of the hero's being, but never has any solution been given. Here in the *Gita*, the tragedy that was perhaps more intense, the travail in the soul of Arjuna which was terribly devastating, was solved. Arjuna was never left to his fate, for here there was Lord Krishna, the inward monitor commanding, directing, counselling and encouraging. He was the master psychologist who, as it were, laid open the errors in Arjuna's personality. It will be for us to examine during the course of these lectures how the conflict was solved, but before we come to the remedies applied to cure the disease, let us understand as far as we can the basis of discord in the mind of Arjuna.

Discord or disharmony arises in our minds – for that matter in the minds of average human beings – when we are unable to establish harmony with our surroundings, situations, events, circumstances, etc., and are unable to reconcile ourselves and our self-created ideals with the grim realities of life. In other words, tense conflicting situations arise when man is unable to decide the course of his conduct in relation to a given situation or a situation which he is called upon to face by virtue of the station of life he occupies, or the demands of social standards, which require him to pursue a course which appears to him seemingly to be contrary to his concepts of right, wrong, sin or sinlessness. In short, much depends upon the pattern of relationship an individual establishes with the world of his immediate surroundings.

In the case of Arjuna, we can safely say that the conflict arose because he could not adjust himself to the situation,

which was by no means sudden, which was not unknown to him and the results of which were also open to anyone to guess. At that critical moment, confusion arises in his mind. He views himself in relation to his opponents as relations by blood; he views himself in relation to the war, as the person called upon to commit a grave moral wrong. The pattern of relationship he established with his immediate surroundings was thus basically wrong in the context of the entire history of relations between the two contending parties, the Pandavas and the Kauravas and the constituents of his own nature. His judgment failed singularly to strike a balance between the rightness of a cause, the ultimate repercussions of letting injustice and tyranny have an unchallenged field for their play and the sentiments of attachment and pity he felt. The emotional upsurge clouded his intellect and paralyzed his mental faculties. For it is common experience that when there is emotional imbalance in man, reason fails to hold sway.

Thus, when Arjuna suffered from the paralyzing effects, of what psychologists of today would call a schizophrenic stage of 'sin delusion', the only solution, was like the psychoanalyst to let the subject talk out and that is what he is made to do in the first chapter when he talks of sin of the disaster that would overtake the social order if he fought the war. Arjuna lays bare his soul, as it were, before the supreme physician. And when we analyze the arguments, advanced by Arjuna we cannot help feeling that he argues from a wrong premise. He talks of ultimate spiritual bliss and a person talking about it should know also the mission of a man and what his duties in life require him to do to reach that state of spiritual grace. Arjuna's arguments reveal that like the ordinary unenlightened individual he speaks of the great sin and the terrible consequences of sin. He thus forfeits his claim to talk of the spirit when throughout his arguments he looks at the flesh which is weak. Instead of taking his stand upon the self which is forever immanent and unchanging, he takes his stand upon the world of objective reality which

is a product of prakriti and, therefore, forever changing. The 'I' becomes the doer, the enjoyer, the sinner. The pattern of relationship was thus established with the world of immediate surroundings rather than with the universe which is governed by an immutable cosmic law. Working in harmony with this great cosmic law which governs the destinies of all created things is the right attitude for man, seeking to fulfil the mission of life, to find the happiness and peace which always elude his grasp.

Thus Arjuna failed to see behind the war, the functioning of that great law, but merely looked upon it as a man-made self-created situation fraught with dangerous potentialities for himself and the social order of which he was an important unit. This is pre-eminently an intensely human situation and it is in such a situation that the distinction between the enlightened and the unenlightened becomes marked, in other words, between the type of mind which is culturally developed and that which is undeveloped. There is no conflict for the unenlightened who remains forever unresponsive to the call of his better nature. In Arjuna it was essentially the call of his better nature which urged him to forswear revenge, to cease to nourish the desire for material gains, but his approach to the problem was misconceived. Arjuna's whole trend of thinking was clouded by an emotional storm and the belief in sin was the superimposition resulting there from – a superimposition arising out of a situation which was entirely normal for a person of his type. Due to this emotional storm, he was unable to see that the higher moral law which governs the universe was directed towards the overthrow of unrighteousness and that he was merely the instrument of that law. He could not hamper its working except at his own peril. His entire moral being was overpowered by the lower pulls of his nature.

If, therefore, Arjuna was out to seek salvation, it could not be had by being self-righteous at a critical moment and stand disconnected with the immutable law and relate

himself to the ephemeral laws of the world. The conflict was not a conflict of a weak, vacillating mind. It was born of a struggle to remove the arrested sense of intellectual solution of a baffling situation facing an enlightened person. The conflict and its ultimate solution show to advantage the better nature of a soul standing divided on the frontiers of the world, ready to cross the bar. Arjuna was not at peace with himself because of a psychological maladjustment. For man is for ever prone to react to life externally even though there is an internal world of immense splendour and glory. The ultimate conversion of Arjuna was the awakening of an inner awareness, a right and correct perception of the forces of life, a right appraisal of the situation and a right appreciation of the spiritual values of life.

The entire picture of confusion which is painted in the first chapter of the *Gita* is indicative of the strength and nature of the emotional disturbance in the human heart which, if allowed to go unchastened, deflects him from his duty. For man has a mission to fulfil. He comes as Wordsworth says, "trailing clouds of glory" from God "who is our home." His mental deformities prevent him from putting himself in the right relation with the world and this wrong relation which Arjuna built up created such a soul searing conflict in his mind. What is true of Arjuna is true of all men. The situation may be different, the intensity of the struggle may be greater or less, but the basis of internal maladjustment is the same. It becomes him to alter the misconceived basis of his relationship with the world of his immediate surroundings. For at all times he must remember that he is the instrument of the Divine and must work in harmony with the divine laws, whether the situation may be to his liking or not.



2

Intellectual Tensions – Their Removal

3 November 1964

We call back our minds to an incident which again happened centuries ago, equally poignant and touching in its simple pathos and equally unparalleled in the history of the world. Here there were no grim realities of an impending bloody battle. Here there was the soft and luxurious atmosphere of a royal palace and the hero was not the warrior ready to wage a bloody war, but a boy, yet a noble prince of a ruling race, and suffering deeply from the psychological maladjustment with his immediate surroundings, like the hero of the Mahabharata war. I am referring to Prince Rama who, weighed down by despondency, not natural in a growing boy, was questioning the whys and wherefores of the universe with all its joys and sorrows, disease and death. And there it was the sage Vasishtha who dispelled the enveloping darkness in the mind of this young prince by explaining in great details the origin of the world, the play of prakriti and its forces, the nature of the mind, the changing nature of the world and a variety of subjects, finally telling Rama that the mind was the creator of all these plethora of troubles and that the mind should be conquered by the mind alone.

Vasishtha indicated that there were two methods by which this mind could be conquered. One was by resort to right knowledge and the other by yoga. These identical

truths, clothed in different language suitable to the subject and to the situation alike, were repeated to Arjuna by Sri Krishna in the *Gita*. We have seen that the basis of discord in Arjuna's mind lay in the very wrong nature of relationship he established with his self vis à vis the world of his immediate surroundings. This intellectual confusion in the assessment of right and proper values created a serious conflict in his mind. His intellect, in trying to weigh the pros and cons of the situation, missed the fundamental truth that there is an immutable law which governs the functioning of the universe and that man who is an important unit of creation has to work in harmony with that law.

When in the emotional upsurge man's intellect gets clouded, he surrenders his judgment to worldly wise men. When Arjuna saw that he had no way out of this dilemma, he admitted that his whole inner vision was blurred by sentimentalism and he did not know what was right for him to do. This was the outcome of distraction of the chitta caused by ignorance, which is defined as the false perception of seeing permanence in impermanence, impurity in purity, self in the non-self. Such was the delusion from which the mind of Arjuna suffered and no delusion could be dispelled by summary treatment. Therefore, Sri Krishna removes the intellectual tension in Arjuna's mind by first administering what psychotherapy would call 'shock treatment' by using harsh appellations in respect of Arjuna enough to arouse his ire.

Arjuna was a Kshatriya, and therefore, rajoguna was the chief constituent of his nature. His blood would naturally warm up at unworthy attributes assigned to him and when the teacher lashed the inertia out of him, he realized his helplessness and the erstwhile doubting, questioning Arjuna becomes the submissive seeker appealing for a solution. Thus when the tension was a little relaxed and the mind and the heart became plastic and responsive, Sri Krishna at once entered into a brief analytical and incisive discussion explaining the evanescence of things in the world, the

mutability of everything except the self, the changeability of everything in this ever-changing world, the coexistence of the pairs of happiness and misery, joy and sorrow, victory and defeat. Sri Krishna dwelt on the need for cultivating mental equilibrium, of realizing the distinction between the real and the unreal, the bringing about of the right awareness of one's duty in relation to the family, society, the world and above all one's own self.

Arjuna is told that he belonged to a martial race, was a prince and, therefore, his dharma was to follow the righteous course of conduct, that weak-kneed submission to the dictates of the sentimental propensities of his nature was unbecoming in a man seeking his ultimate welfare. Escapism from reality was never conducive to the good of man. Sri Krishna tells Arjuna that he had strayed away from the centre of his being and when the wavering balance of self is shaken, right adjustment can come only by plunging into one's duty and not letting the mind be carried away by flowery language of other-wordliness, when this world was itself knocking for admission at the portals of one's being. Wisdom does not consist in trying to deceive oneself and escaping the field of duty, with the mind still saturated by the attachments however subtle, of the world or in attempting to reach transcendental heights with feet still firmly rooted into the earth and all that is earthly.

Wisdom consists in knowing oneself and one's limitations and attempting to go beyond them, in knowing the inherent nature of the things of this world, in knowing the law of one's being that death is the necessary corollary to birth. Therefore, if death comes to one or many, whether as a result of some cause or of war, it was in accordance with the laws which govern the world. The wise grieve not, for what dies is the body; the soul is eternal, unchanging, imperishable. The perishable do not survive, the imperishable never ceases to exist. Again, the destruction is not ultimate; it is rechanging, reshaping, remoulding for nature's ultimate purpose what is not necessary for her use. Men have lived and died and will

be reborn. It is not for man to sit in judgment with his finite intellect upon the working of the infinite. His duty is to do the task allotted to him. For the proper discharge of his duty without attachment is the highest religion of man.

Sri Krishna points out that a balanced man is one who maintains equilibrium and is able to work efficiently in the world with discernment and intelligence, and that men do exist who work in harmony with the great law, unaffected and unconcerned. Such men of steady wisdom, who mind their mission in life, are not affected by birth or death, heat or cold, victory or defeat, joy or sorrow. Such men are equal to friend and foe, for they neither love nor hate. Such men are always awake. Their inward awareness is ever alive. Arjuna is called upon to resort to the *buddhi yoga*, the yoga of discernment, the yoga of equipoise, of efficiency in action.

The imbalance in the mind of Arjuna is pointed out to him by Sri Krishna by telling him that his whole inner vision was clouded by *moha* or delusion and therefore, he was not able to view things in their correct perspective. His intellect must, therefore, be made one-pointed and not allowed to remain distracted if he wished to tread the path of spiritual elevation. Between knowledge and action, there exists a correlation which must be appreciated by an intelligent man. Action without right knowledge was the root cause of all suffering and bondage. All actions are not to be done merely as blind pursuits, but as aids calculated to bring about a full and complete life. Performance of one's duty does not become sinful unless the driving impulse behind the commission or omission of an act was motivated by a selfish desire, a desire for personal good, by love, by hate or revenge. Right conduct is guided by clarity of intellect which runs clear of the storm of emotional upsurges. Unless, therefore, the *buddhi*, the intellectual apparatus, is undivided and centralized, man is bound to stumble and fall. The function of the intellect is to discern between right and wrong, good and bad, and if this is arrested by emotional upsurges and vacillating moods, then man fails to strike the right path.

Therefore, Sri Krishna points out that an attitude of equipoise leads to balanced and efficient action. Difficulties come to those whose intellect is divided and unenlightened. For they think of lives hereafter, of suffering and purification by penance. Duty is a way of life. To confuse the material issues with the activities on the spiritual plane is not right conduct. The material is the base from which the spiritual goal could be achieved. Arjuna is told that confusion comes to one whose play of senses is uncontrolled. Therefore, all action, to be an aid to higher life, must be performed with detachment. Lasting happiness accrues to the man of chastened intellect and subdued mind, even though his external behaviour may be normal. Instead of the desires swallowing him, he consumes them and is therefore, at peace with himself. Even as the mighty ocean is not disturbed by the flow of waters of numerous rivers, likewise, the mind of a man of steady wisdom is not disturbed by the inflow of sentimental storms.

Intellectual tensions arise because intellect itself is unable to exercise its functions of discrimination and decision as it becomes distracted by forces of mental and emotional imbalance. The *Gita* shows that the best way to remove such intellectual tensions is not by abjuring the path of duty, but by continuing to work amidst all the unpalatable surroundings, letting the faculty of thinking resolve itself into its natural state and begin to appraise the situation existing at a given moment. This is a process of self-correction, the way to proceed from lesser truth to higher truth and this was shown to Arjuna.



3

Release of Psychophysical Tensions

4 November 1964

Psychology and in recent years logotherapy are grappling with the problem of making life endurable by removing tensions and conflicts which dog man at every step he takes during his brief sojourn. For this is a world full of tensions, and man is becoming increasingly aware that life, to be made liveable, must have a different set of values. The problem of human life is never a new one. It has been the subject matter of investigation in all ages and solutions for resolving the conflicts and tensions, which beset a man, have been found and declared by those past masters of the science of the soul. The problem which we are discussing during these lectures is not an isolated problem applicable to a single individual, but it is a problem common to all, though it may differ in degree, but never does it differ in kind, and while psychotherapy, the science of mental healing, attempts to release these tensions and restore mental equilibrium by various methods, logotherapy has given a new direction to these efforts and lays down the principle that frustrations, conflicts, tensions arise only when man fails to find a meaning in life.

Interpreting Arjuna's despondency in the light of this new theory, we will at once see that, what is considered to be a new interpretation is merely one which was always in the

forefront in all religions. Religion evolved spontaneously through the declarations of the seers of ancient times to give a new dimension to human thought which was prone otherwise to entangle itself in the meandering maze of this world of sorrows and phantoms. Therefore, the intellectual, psychophysical and emotional tensions which completely disrupted the personality of Arjuna existed as long as he failed to find a meaning in his life in the confusion of an inner conflict.

Any conflict is susceptible of solution by means of enlightened understanding, and this can only be developed by plunging into a plethora of activities instead of remaining idle and inactive. For life to have a purpose it must be active and directed to that goal. Nature abhors stagnation. She seeks renewal and revives herself in new forms. She is ever active, and the mind of man too seeks renewal, but its progress is arrested and hampered by letting it function on a wrong plane of thought. Sri Krishna, by his instructions, gave a new direction to the thinking processes of Arjuna's mind by pointing out to him the correct nature of the world, the need for equipoise and for efficient action.

One whose mind is torn between doubt and disbelief is apt to confuse issues and Arjuna's confusion increased when he was not able to reconcile the correlation between knowledge and action with his own interpretation of it, as distinct and separate and Sri Krishna, therefore, explains to him the theory of action. Since action is the condition of existence, it is futile to say that man can renounce action and remain inactive. Inactivity, which is only an attitude of the mind and which is not the outcome of enlightened understanding but of inertia, will only add to his troubles. Inertia cannot be replaced at once by enlightenment without going through the intermediate stage of ceaseless action. The impurities of tamoguna which result in inertia or inaction can only be resolved and removed through rajoguna or the state of activity, and the mind so purified can gradually reach the stage of enlightenment. Inaction, it is explained, does not

and can never mean total cessation of activities. There can be no retirement from performance of actions while life exists, and it is wrong to assume that by withdrawing from the world one is said to have renounced actions. Cessation of activities of the physical organism is not inaction, for the senses will continue to function in their fields. The belief that there are two paths, the path of knowledge and the path of action or the path of spiritual mysticism and the path of active mysticism, distinct and separate from each other, is wrong. The world itself is thrown out of the incessant movement of prakriti, and man the product of that prakriti can never remain inactive. It is a delusion to believe, as Arjuna did, that he can attain to spiritual elevation through renunciation abjuring his duty and Sri Krishna, therefore, propounds an interesting and attractive theory to lead Arjuna to action and to release his tensions and conflicts.

Sri Krishna explains that on the cosmic plane a chain of cause and effect is made operative by considering all actions as a sort of sacrifice, *yajna*. Sacrifice in its widest sense means giving oneself in action, thought and speech to the fulfilment of the great law which governs the world. It is self-abandonment. There is interdependence between the human and the divine intelligence which is at the back of this process of creation. Man suffers when egged on by his desires and wrong sense of values he tries to break this cooperative chain. The science of life is rooted in the fundamental principle of 'giving life to enjoy living'. In the working of the eternal forces of life, there is interwoven a process which shows an intelligent and well-planned working where each unit of creation gave something for common benefit. Man propitiated gods by rituals, who in their turn gave rain to earth, which gave food and food gave life – all these constitute a contributory process. Each was thus serving the other by an unconscious process of self-abandonment, which was an act of sacrifice. The significance is that the discharge of one's duty with an eye to the dispensation of providence was in itself a substantial contribution to the evolution of

man and his progress from stage to stage to the ultimate, and of realizing the infinite which Arjuna sought to achieve by a wrong method.

Sri Krishna, therefore, tells Arjuna that he must cultivate a sense of detachment and evolve a way of life in tune with the natural laws, that he need not seek rewards, for rewards follow during the natural process of the working of this law. The world is not only “a drained machinery of sin and sorrow” (Browning). He should change the pattern of his relationship and realize that in the interdependence of this universe between man and the law of creation, God blesses man for the intelligent use to which he puts his faculties. To a man who understands this and takes delight in the creative joy of work, no action binds. God Himself, when He incarnates for setting the balance of forces right in the world functions under these laws. Sri Krishna points out that the law that He lays down was not new. All spiritual traditions have continuity. The human mind fails to understand it, and whenever there is conflict between right and wrong there is divine descent, but even so this force functions within the limits of the laws of prakriti. Man is to play the part of a mediator between the world and God and if he realizes this, there would be no conflict of emotions, no fear of sin and no sorrow. It is further explained that man’s spiritual evolution is automatically graded. It is a gradation inherited by him and is expressed through the four divisions or *varnas* in society.

Sri Krishna further says that man thus bound by the forces of nature can lift himself if he understands fully the distinction between action, inaction and wrong or perverse action. Right action is the action performed in accordance with the great law, wrong action or perverse action is contrary to that law and inaction is reflected in the inner attitude and an inward awareness of the self in the midst of all actions. Man must, therefore, know the constituents of his being in the light of these eternal laws. Such an inward awareness takes the sting out of actions and then all that one does is only according to the law.

Sri Krishna also warns Arjuna not to abandon what is consistent with the law of his being and to undertake tasks foreign to his nature. He emphasizes that it is not inaction not to undertake physical activities and sit in splendid isolation with the mind still running after the senses. If one wilfully tries to transgress these eternal laws, he errs sadly. For the law of evolution demands that man's natural progress should be towards selflessness and purity and therefore, nothing that is selfish and impure could be treated as the right course of conduct. All acts, mental, physical, intellectual and spiritual must thus be related to the central motive of life, which, even Arjuna recognized, is self-realization. It is only when the cobwebs of the mind are cleared and mental purity is achieved that real knowledge comes. The acquisition of knowledge presupposes the existence of a spirit of self-surrender, a spirit of enquiry and of service. Man must realize that the divine descends on the earth only to show that there is interdependence between the great law of which 'He is the author and the executor of these laws, who is the man'.

Arjuna is asked to change the pattern of his relationship which is based on a false premise and relate himself to the central law of his being which is in consonance with the supreme law which fulfils itself. In the game of life between God and His laws on one side and man and his senses on the other, it is always the former that wins because He is the truth, the life, the light.

The way of life of an individual has to be regulated carefully in full awareness of this fact and the activities he is supposed to undertake in his assignment in this world. Since he has to move along with the cosmic wheel, his motion has to be related to it. There is no independent functioning. This is the eternal law which did not originate out of the spiritual crisis in the mind of Arjuna, but which was coexistence with the universe and was immanent. At each stage, when truth and righteousness tend to lose their force and sanctity, when man's aspirations shows

a downward trend, when a unit of creation establishes a wrong pattern of relationship with the world and needs either to be destroyed or corrected, the law functions in such a way that out of the ashes of his worldly ambitions and aspirations man is resurrected and brought in line with his real nature, the self.

Arjuna is thus taught that the physical lassitude, thought blocking, mental inertia and emotional incongruity – all will resolve themselves ultimately if, without trying to disturb the functioning of the cosmic law, he relates himself to it correctly and faithfully does his duty.



4

Removal of Emotional Tensions

5 November 1964

We have seen in the preceding lectures that for an individual to resolve the conflicts and tensions in his mind, it is necessary for him to understand his personality and also the motivating factors which drive him to the commission or non-commission of any action. Self-knowledge, self-discipline and self-control achieve the desired results. His sharpened understanding must learn to differentiate between the essentials and non-essentials, and thus identification with the non-essentials ceases. The natural tendency, however, to place emphasis on non-essentials in an illusory belief that happiness can be achieved thereby, is responsible for the major tragedies of life. Therefore, in the period of this moral crisis Arjuna was told that he was placing a wrong emphasis on what, not only was not essential for spiritual progress, but was clearly a bar to it, that clinging to traditional theories and blind faith without understanding, can never lead to self realization, which was the privilege of a few.

Arjuna's emotions were in a state of confusion and he was moved by attachment for the world and all that was worldly. He was first told that the clarity of intellect could be achieved by enlightened understanding as to the nature of God, the soul and the universe; that restlessness and inertia could be removed by performing with a stout heart

one's allotted task, keeping in view the objective and also working in harmony with the natural laws of life. Now the third aspect of personality is being discussed, the emotional being of man.

Man's emotions and impulses are usually wasted in pursuit of things of the world due to attachment to sense objects and therefore, since everything in the world was in a state of flux, the objects of the world cannot give emotional satisfaction. Therefore, Arjuna is told that if buddhi yoga, the intellectual apprehension of the principles of existence, was not possible, if actions could not be performed in the spirit of sacrifice, then the diffused emotions could be channelled towards devotion to God. Love for the material could be sublimated into love for the spiritual, for the Divine.

A mind and a heart which seek refuge in God will know God in fullness in His different manifestations either by direct spiritual illumination or by a detailed knowledge of the principles of existence. It was thus necessary for man to know the varying manifestations of the Supreme reality as reflected in the world. This knowledge was indeed difficult of acquisition. Countless since the days of creation have sought for it and strived for it, but only a rare soul has been able to achieve it. Therefore, man must first learn to see the omnipresence of God in all aspects in this universe. The objective world is made up of prakriti which manifests itself through eight aspects in the form of earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, understanding and the ego. It is through this ego that one relates oneself to the objects of the world. This is the lower nature, but the Supreme is the Ishwara, the lord of the universe, by whose power the world is created. He is the creator, preserver and the destroyer of everything, the life and form of everything. Multiplicity is only a form of His expression.

It is also explained that the essence of everything is also His manifestation. The light in the sun and the moon, the sound in ether, the smell in earth reflect the essence of the divine power. Our failure to realize the ultimate truth is

only because we look to the changing forms as real, but fail to comprehend the reality behind them and so suffer from all these sorrows and conflicts, such emotional crisis at the thought of the death of many in a righteous war. The mind engrossed in the world of sense pursuits blunts the edge of intellect. No renunciation can bring ultimate bliss until the inner being has not realized in fullness the relation of matter and spirit.

Sri Krishna, therefore, advises Arjuna that the best way is to recollect his scattered emotions and centralize them in the worship of God. The love for the world could be sublimated into the love for the Divine and since love means and implies an overall surrender to the object of one's devotion, he should surrender himself to God. Then there will be no conflicts. Then He alone will be the dispenser of everything. The sense of doership will go and with it the sense of sin and the like also. Sri Krishna further points out that there are persons who worship the Supreme Being, but their worship is purposive and limited and therefore, they are divided into four categories according to their mental and emotional surrender. However, the wise and the knowing ones have everything to give and nothing to receive. They have no emotional tensions to be reduced for they know that there is an answering presence which gives without asking whatever is desired. Sri Krishna tells Arjuna, therefore, that the divide reaches the human according to the intensity of his craving, and it is only through undivided devotion and love that the harmony within is realized when the emotions flow in one steady stream only towards one objective, the Supreme, enveloping this phenomenal world in its current.

Sri Krishna also explains that the periodical emergence and dissolution of the whole cosmos takes place according to a fixed law, but the Supreme is not affected by it. Multitudes of existences follow this cosmic cycle. The absolute is above and beyond it and one who wishes to tread the path of bliss must have this knowledge, which is a condition precedent

to its acquisition, for it demands the whole personality of man, his unswerving devotion and an abiding faith before the Absolute is realized in experience. There should thus be an inward awareness. The reality has to be penetrated and a direct experience acquired by a scientific knowledge of the Absolute, but every man is not admitted to the privilege of this knowledge, which is secret, sovereign and sacrosanct. That is why it is unrevealed knowledge and can be experienced through self-denial, detachment and consistent efforts. The Supreme exists and His existence must be felt in every pulsation of life. Such an experience demands indomitable faith and faith is the rock stone on which the mansion of divine knowledge stands. The faith demanded of Arjuna by Sri Krishna was the faith in the ultimate higher destiny of man, faith in the wisdom which saves man from falling, faith which enlightens and illumines, faith which inspires man to move from progress to progress and above all faith in the ultimate reality. He has to realize and feel His answering presence in all situations, however trying and baffling they may be. Devotion cannot take root in a heart devoid of such faith or devoid of great love. Mere indifference to the claims of the world without awakening of divine love would be stagnation.

Sri Krishna also explains that man's natural wisdom is enveloped by maya, which is also an expression of the power of the Divine. Through the agency of yogamaya, a multitude of worlds are created and, though playing within them in an incarnate form, the Supreme yet transcends them. Sri Krishna points out that there is a hidden purpose behind all change. An aspirant does not concern himself with all these. When God reveals Himself for removing the imbalance of forces for the betterment of humanity it is the formless taking a form. Man's entire attention in every sphere of life, in every activity must, therefore, centre round this central fact, and he should relate himself to it and not to the world. In his ignorance man is deceived by his own nature which is dominated by desires, darkness and inertia.

Arjuna wanted to achieve *shreya*, the path of righteousness, by avoiding what he regarded to be a sinful duty and following a course of conduct which he regarded as leading to heaven. Sri Krishna points out that those who follow the Vedas and perform the rituals certainly go to heaven, but that is not the point of no return. They have to come back. When the storehouse of these so called meritorious deeds is exhausted, they come back again to this world where they have to perform actions, and actions will follow their mental tendencies. If the mind is anchored in God the burden of giving lasting good is taken on by God. Sri Krishna also explains that, even if the mind clings to lesser forms of God, it is only calculated to solidify the faith of man, for even that worship is transferred to the Supreme. The unenlightened or the lesser evolved souls do not know Him. The law is that each man gets what he aspires for. Scriptures prescribe worship of gods, worship of the names and the worship of spirits – all these are indicative of the stages of evolving consciousness. The devotion may be sincere yet it is not well based for it seeks to differentiate between the multiple manifestations of the same reality.

Sri Krishna, therefore, emphasizes the need for self-effacement and complete surrender. The comprehension of the Supreme is not realized by a dissertation of metaphysical truths or through expensive complicated rituals. Surrender alone leads to the realization in experience of the Supreme. All actions then tend to be sanctified. In the clearest of language Sri Krishna affirms that even if the meanest of men were to surrender to Him in love and devotion, he becomes righteous. He ceases to be wicked, for a heart full of divine love cannot remain impure. Sri Krishna points out that the formless is difficult of comprehension and so worship of the incarnate God being easy of attainment should be undertaken. He, therefore, admonishes Arjuna to devote his emotional upsurges to the worship of the Supreme Lord and channel them there instead of letting them be wasted in the earthly plane and the world of the senses.

In the final analysis the message of the Divine to the struggling despondent human is that, though placed in any sphere of life, faced with situations which may be grim and unpalatable, if he surrenders his heart and soul at the altar of Divinity, fixes his mind on God, offers his devotion to God, worships Him and sees Him reflected in all the different facets of life, he will reach Him.

The emotional confusion and incongruity can thus be resolved by sublimating one's attachment and lifting them to the higher plane of devotion to the Almighty. Sri Krishna indicated this method to the frustrated Arjuna, so that he could reach the highest beatitude he wished to reach and find the real meaning of life.



The battlefield of the *Bhagavad Gita* is your life and existence, which you face every day, in every incarnation. Many people are not aware of this battlefield, but those who are sincere aspirants become aware of this battlefield where two conflicting armies are facing each other, known as dharma and adharma.

These two forces are also known as spiritual force and materialistic force. One force drags you down into the world of attachment and another force elevates you to spiritual awareness. Sometimes we are elevated, sometimes we are depressed, sometimes we are engrossed in matter, sometimes we think about spiritual ideas. Therefore, this battlefield must be conquered.

—Swami Satyananda Saraswati

5

The Cosmic Vision

6 November 1964

No amount of theoretical exposition as to the nature of the world, God and the human mind swayed by desire can ever bring home the realization of the ultimate truth that nothing exists in this universe which is real, that the soul alone is the eternal reality. It requires an actual experience of a sublime mystical character to carry such a conviction to the human understanding. Where doubts prevail, disbelief in the ultimate reality which is unseen and unseeable persists, where the mind is tossed to and fro on the stormy sea of desires, where the intellect remains paralyzed due to the entanglements in the meshes of a complicated existence, where the heart is parched by longing after the mirage of happiness – where, in brief, the human personality is completely disrupted from all sides, such an experience can only be achieved through the grace of a great guru, symbolizing in flesh and blood, the glory and the expression of the Supreme.

We have seen the state of Arjuna's mind and the methods indicated by that greatest teacher, Sri Krishna, to resolve the moral crisis in which he was involved. His intellectual confusion was dispelled through the sublime exposition on the immutability of the soul and the mutability of the world. His physical lassitude and inertia

were treated by means of a correct and true exposition of the nature and kinds of actions, the supreme need for doing them and of the kind of attitude to be developed towards them. And his emotional tensions, arising out of an uncontrolled upheaval within were resolved by showing the way to channel the emotions and centre them round the devotion to God. In the course of the discussion as to the form, the nature and method of such a devotion, it was explained that the unmanifest was a matter of realization only and could not be comprehended by the finite mind and the intellect, and therefore, the seeker after truth must first slowly and gradually develop an eye to see the presence of the Divine in the diversity about him. The divine glory is ever-present and can be seen by one whose vision is pure and unsullied by the impurities of the world.

Sri Krishna set at rest the mind of Arjuna by pointing out that the glory of the Supreme was perceptible to the human eye and comprehensible by the human mind, and a heart full of love and devotion can see the manifestations of the Divine everywhere. Nothing that exists in this world, whether animate or inanimate is devoid of His glory. The good and the bad are the divisions of the same reality made by the human mind according to its sense of values but in the realm of the spirit there is only the one abiding reality. The Supreme manifests himself in the light of the sun and the moon, in the smell of the earth, in the goodness of the good as in the wickedness of the bad, in and through all the created things. Whether it be a sage or a hero, a river or a mountain, a fish or a crocodile, whether it is the justice of the just or the injustice of the wicked, in and through all the spheres of existence, physical, mental and emotional, He manifests Himself through these bewilderingly varied forms of His expression. Sri Krishna, therefore, asks Arjuna to look not at the surface of things, but to realize that at the depths of all things, there abides the immanent and all-pervading reality. It is not for the finite mind to dissect and analyze, doubt and disbelieve things which it can never comprehend

except by and through an inner experience. It was a matter of inward awareness, not of intellectual comprehension.

The confusion in the mind of Arjuna, who it must be remembered was an enlightened soul desirous of reaching the highest state, was thus slowly resolved and the inner light began to give him a glimpse into the real nature of things. So he longed to realize in experience this unity in the apparent diversity, this actual functioning of that great immutable law at the behest of a sovereign power, that created, destroyed and recreated a multitude of worlds. Thus enlightened, Arjuna was on the threshold of a deep and mystic experience and when in the sovereign moments of existence, a rare moment comes when the heart and the mind with a single-minded purpose and devotion long for a great and stupendous spiritual experience with a sincere and pure heart, the grace of God descends and that moment has to be seized or it never recurs.

That great moment for Arjuna had come, he was standing on the frontiers of two worlds – one of his immediate surroundings rapidly receding in the distance, the other one of supreme beauty and grandeur about to be opened before him, and at that supremely beautiful moment when amidst the travails and anguish of the soul, he surrendered himself at the feet of the Divine, or in other words when the extrovert mind turned totally inward and reached the near self-stage, away from the distractions of the world of sense-consciousness and dwelt deep within, an effulgent splendour was made visible. Sri Krishna saw the deep unquenchable longing in the depths of Arjuna's being and gave him the divine vision. This divine eye is not a mere physical phenomenon, but it is the awakening of the 'third eye', the eye of knowledge or the eye of illumination, which is opened only when the entire being of man completely works in harmony with the great cosmic law, when self-effacement, self-surrender and self-denial are complete.

The grace of God descends in such circumstances upon the aspiring human soul and the little limited

ego, within whose narrow confines the faculties were functioning, assuming doership and enjoyership, dividing, differentiating and distinguishing, piece by piece, individual units out of a complete whole, is transformed and becomes the seer, a witness of the stupendous drama of creation. The mystic experience of infinite grandeur and majesty which Arjuna was given is the result of the awakening of the inner awareness of the supremacy and the all-pervasiveness of the self. There Arjuna saw visions, not only of sublime beauty, but also of hideous terror. He realized that the one whom he regarded as his friend and the charioteer was the Supreme, shining with the effulgent splendour of a thousand suns, pervading the entire universe consisting of those multitudes of worlds of which the scriptures speak. He was the one whose glories were sung through the infinite time by sages and illumined souls. He was 'the supreme container of all, containing everything in him and yet not contained in entirety in any', He was the great Kala, the devourer of everything in the creation and in the inward awareness of his illumined self. Arjuna saw with speechless wonder the entire universe being ground down by the fierce teeth of the terrible manifestation of the Supreme in the form of Kala.

The majesty of the vision that Arjuna saw was indescribable, for it was something that transcended the realms of the mind and speech; it was an inner mystic experience, the grand sublimity of which could only be expressed in the silence of a chastened spirit. The senses and their play were silenced and the manipulations of the restless mind were also silenced in awe and wonder. No wonder, therefore, that when that experience of serene spiritual unity of all created things with the source of all things was felt, the heart of Arjuna was bowed down with wonder, awe and supreme humility. He realized, in actual experience, that the Supreme was the ultimate reality towards which the entire creation moved governed by a great immutable law, that he was only a unit in this cosmic chain and had to play his part as the instrument of the Divine.

When the illumined eye of the yogi – and here Arjuna was for the moment the yogi, who had reached the near-ultimate state of union with the Supreme Self – sees himself established in the Self, sees that the world of names and forms emanates from the Self by the projection of His omnipotent power, it loses all its significance. For through such an experience of an exalted nature the yogi realizes that the power which he sees functioning is not separate from the self. He knows that the ultimate and right relationship is with the self and self alone and not with the world, which is only a phase of the projection of the mind, with its tendencies running uncontrolled and that there is an “inward centre in us all where truth abides in fullness” (Browning). He knows that this identification with the self-created world and self-imagined concepts of right action and wrong action, of sin and sinlessness, of good and bad were merely assessments of values by means of supremely mundane and finite standards. In other words what happened was the cosmicization of the ego which surrendered its separate individuality and resolved back to its source, the Self.

Such a cosmic vision which Arjuna had with the grace of the Divine was nothing but the awakening of the inward awareness, the opening of the intuitive eye of knowledge, the *ritambhara prajna*, of the yogi which illumines the essential nature of everything. Arjuna’s experience was nothing but one sovereign moment of an existence when the mind and the senses resolve back to their source, where the thought processes were silenced and the entire being was attuned to the highest. When such a realization comes, the seeker is absolved from the results of all actions, for the mind and the senses, having finished their respective functions of bringing the individual self to the stage of union, cease to function. It was a case of dwelling within, of release from the state of involvement with prakriti and its laws.

Such a vision comes only to a rare soul whose entire being is completely surrendered to the Supreme and whose actions, mental, intellectual and spiritual are done, devoid of ego as

a sacrifice at the altar of the Supreme. In such a state where the mind ceases to exist, there remain neither intellectual confusions nor emotional incongruity. The basis of discord in the mind of Arjuna is thus removed when he realized the real nature of his own self and stood firmly established in it. This indeed is the pledge of the Lord in the *Gita* (18:66):

Renounce all things foreign to thy nature and resolve thyself unto Me; then shall I release thee from all sin – grieve not.



The Liberated Man

Nineteen vital slokas of Samkhya Yoga
from lectures on the *Bhagavad Gita*

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



Yoga Publications Trust, Munger, Bihar, India

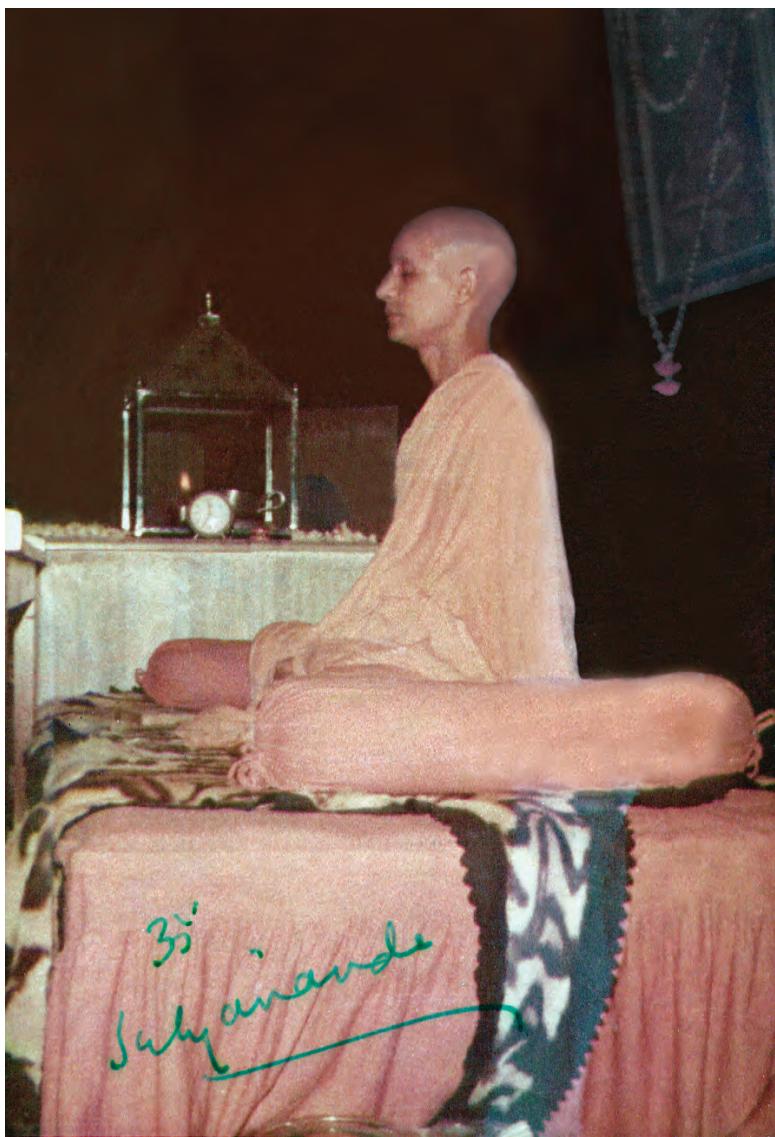
The following three commentaries on the *Bhagavad Gita* were delivered by Swami Satyananda to the students of the twenty-nation International Yoga Teachers' Training Course. This nine-month course was held from 1st July 1967 to 31st March 1968 at Bihar School of Yoga, Munger, Bihar.

The Liberated Man is an interpretation of nineteen slokas from chapter two of the *Bhagavad Gita*. It was published to commemorate the global tour of Sri Swami Satyananda from April to August 1968.

Swami Yogeshwarananda Saraswati (compiler)

In June 1967 Swami Yogeshwarananda (The Netherlands) came to Munger to join the nine-month International Yoga Teachers Training course held from July 1967 to March 1968. On 2nd November 1967 she was initiated into sannyasa. Everyone was amazed at the remarkable quickness with which she assimilated not only the fundamentals but also the deep-rooted philosophies of yoga. She dedicated her life to yoga and the welfare of humankind.

Swami Yogeshwarananda compiled *The Liberated Man and Wisdom of Gita*.



SWAMI SATYANANDA SARASWATI
– harbinger of the psychic race

Publishers Note

Confusion and loss of vision are the characteristics of modern man. The complexities of life, coupled with a rapid acceleration in the mode of living, have necessitated a fresh outlook on problems and a new interpretation and explanation of the ancient sacred texts. To meet this need we, the publishers, take great pride in presenting this booklet. It is a compilation and restating of inspired words of Paramahansa Satyananda Saraswati as he delivered lectures on the *Bhagavad Gita* to the students of the First International Yoga Teachers Training Course.

The wisdom of the ancient sacred texts of India needs to spread the message not only in India but throughout the world. It must speak in a language intelligible to the average man. This booklet answers this need. It is to earmark the global tour of Paramahansa Satyananda Saraswati, who leaves shortly to touch the world with his language of wisdom, clarity and truth. Swamiji speaks to the heart of the average man as well as to the mind of the intellect. This booklet speaks through Swamiji in the same manner.

We wish him all success on his mission.

—K. K. Goenka, *Publisher*

The Liberated Man

Sloka 54

Chapter 2

अर्जुन उवाच
स्थितप्रज्ञस्य का भाषा समाधिस्थस्य केशव ।
स्थितधीः किं प्रभाषेत किमासीत ब्रजेत किम् ॥

Translation

Arjuna asked Lord Krishna:

What is the definition of one who is steady in intuition, established in his buddhi and merged in the superconscious state, having attained samadhi? How does he speak, how does he sit and how does he walk?

Word-to-word meaning

Arjuna: name of Lord Krishna's disciple; *uvacha*: spoke; *sthita*: always in a steady position, not moving, established; *prajna*: knowledge or wisdom with experience and intuition, (*sthita-prajnasya*: a man of steady wisdom, a person established in intuition with experience); *ka*: what; *bhasha*: definition, description (derived from the root *bhasa*: to speak, language); *samadhisthasya*: the man merged in the superconscious state, one who has attained *samadhi* (*samadhi* meaning equilibrium state of consciousness, calmness, equipoise, total serenity of mind); *kesava*: Lord Krishna (*ke*: in the water; *sava*: sleeping, water is the symbol of psychic consciousness in man, in

creation. Lord Krishna is taken to be the incarnation of Vishnu and the place of Vishnu is on the water); *sthitadheehi*: man of steady wisdom whose inner self is established (*sthita*: established; *dheehi*: inner self, all three stages of consciousness); *kim*: how, what; *prabhsheta*: speaks (derived from the root *bhasha*: language, definition, commentary); *kimasita*: how sits (*asita*: sits, derived from *asan*: position, way of sitting); *vrajeta*: walks, moves; *kim*: how, (*vrajeta kim*: how does he walk, move); *kim prabhasheta*: how does he speak; *kim asita*: how does he sit.

Explanation

Arjuna asks Lord Krishna for the description of him who is merged in the superconscious state, established in intuition and steady in wisdom. How does he live and move, how does he speak and sit and walk? When he projects his mind on external things, how does he behave in relation to all others in society? Arjuna is desirous of knowing those characteristic marks of a man established in the Self, in samadhi.

The terms *sthitaprajna*, *samadhista* and *sthitadhee* connote the same. It is the knower of Brahman that becomes Brahman. *Prajna* is wisdom. The word *prajna* is used for higher wisdom, not mere knowledge. Wherever in Sanskrit the letter *jna* occurs, it implies a process of wisdom. The prefix *pra* means special. Therefore, *prajna* means special wisdom, higher wisdom, complete wisdom. It is the wisdom born of deeper experiences. It is intuition. *Samadhi* means equilibrium, equipoise, calmness, serenity of mind. The state of *samadhi* is that state when everything in the mind is totally quiet, beyond all forms of agitation, when the inner life is calm, serene and unexcited. Intuition is the outcome of this mental state; it is the outcome of *samadhi*. There are various states of *samadhi*, and in sloka 54, the state of *savikalpa samadhi* is implied, that state when all agitations of the mind are temporarily or permanently suspended.

Keshava means Lord Krishna. Literally it means 'he who sleeps in the water' and water is the symbol of the

psychic consciousness in man. Objective consciousness, the organic consciousness of the world emerged from water. In the beginning there was water, and from water came the projection of life in the form of a fish. The mind is water, for the presiding deity of the mental element in man is water. The collective psychic consciousness in man is called *hiranyagarbha*. *Hiranya* means golden, *garbha* means depth. The place of *hiranyagarbha* is water. Thus, the presiding deity of mental consciousness is water. The symbol of psychic consciousness in man is water. The dwelling place of the collective psychic consciousness, *hiranyagarbha*, is water. *Hiranyagarbha*, the collective psychic consciousness in creation, sleeps in a dormant, inherent, non-dynamic form in our innermost being, in water. The mind is the basis and support for that collective consciousness. Therefore, all that is, sleeps in water, and *keshava* means that supreme life who sleeps in water, Lord Krishna.

Arjuna has raised the question to Lord Krishna. What are the marks and definitive characteristics of a man merged in the superconscious state? Lord Krishna answers this question in the following slokas.

Sloka 55

Chapter 2

श्रीभगवानुवाच
 प्रजहाति यदा कामान्सर्वान्यार्थं मनोगतान्।
 आत्मन्येवात्मना तुष्टः स्थितप्रज्ञस्तदोच्यते ॥

Translation

The Lord said:

When a person has completely destroyed all his inner desires, his deepest subconscious desires, when he is contented within his own self and through his own self, then he is established in intuition and stable in wisdom.

Word-to-word meaning

Sri: always used for those who are highly respectable; *Bhagavan*: God, Supreme Being, Lord of the universe; *uvacha*: spoke, told; *prajahati*: casts off, throws away; *yada*: when; *kaman*: passions, desires; *sarvan*: all; *partha*: O Arjuna; *manogatan*: of the mind, rooted in the subconscious, contained within the psyche; *atmani*: in the self, in atma; *eva*: alone, only; *atmana*: by the self, through the self, by atma, through atma; *tushtah*: satisfied, self-contented; *sthitaprajna*: of steady wisdom, steady intuition; *tada*: then; *uchyate*: is said, is called, is spoken of.

Explanation

In sloka 55, Lord Krishna answers the first part of Arjuna's question. If one is established in supreme bliss, will he then search outside for lesser satisfactions? When the mind is pacified by relinquishing all the *kamas*, desires, atman can be realized in its original glory. Then man is self-satisfied, content entirely within himself. Then he is stable in wisdom and established in intuition.

Sri Bhagavan uvacha – Sri is used for supreme respect, for a person of divine wealth. *Bhagavan* is God, possessor of the power of creation, the organic instrument for the creative power. Literally, the word *bhaga* means the passage of procreation. And so the *jiva*, the individual soul, has passed through dark periods, periods of the dark night, before objective formation and creation. *Bhagavan* means 'the creative instrument of the entire cosmos'. *Uvacha* is the past tense of *vachan*, speech, thus meaning 'said'.

Kama in Sanskrit is always used for a process of desiring. Kama denotes desires not only known to the intellect and conscious mind, as desire for wealth, property, children and fame, but those passions and desires of the subconscious mind. Kama covers the entire range of desires and thus after the word kama, *sarva* is used to make clear this entire range. (*sarva* means all, without exception, entire, complete).

In Sanskrit, the term *atma* is used to denote the spiritual being in us, the spark of the Divine, though it is sometimes

used to denote the mental being also. In sloka 56 the term *atma* covers both aspects that a man contains within his own mind, within his own being, within his spiritual self. Thus, when a man casts off all forms of desire, destroying all inner passions and cravings, then he is content within himself and is of steady wisdom.

Sloka 56

Chapter 2

दुःखेष्वनुद्विग्नमनाः सुखेषु विगतस्पृहः ।
वीतरागभयक्रोधः स्थितधीर्मुनिरुच्यते ॥

Translation

The man, whose mind is not agitated by sorrows, whose thirst for pleasure is quenched and who is free from attachments, fear and anger, he is called stable in mind.

Word-to-word meaning

Dukheshu anudvigna manah: unperturbed in pains; (*dukha*: bad experience, adversity, pain, sorrow; *an*: no; *udvigna*: perturbed, agitated; *anudvigna*: not excited, undisturbed, unaffected; *manah*: mind); *sukheshu*: in good experience, in pleasure; (*su*: good); *vigat*: completely gone, absolutely gone; *sprihah*: thirst, craving; *vita-raga-bhaya-krodhah*: free from raga, bhaya and krodhah; (*vita*: gone finished; *raga*: attachment; desire; *bhaya*: fear; *krodhah*: anger); *sthita-dhir-muni-ruchyate*: such a muni is said to be a person of stabilized mind and constant wisdom; (*sthitadhi*: he who is established in his buddhi; *muni*: he who has silenced his mind; *uchyate*: is called).

Explanation

Lord Krishna now explains the pacification of the mind and the conduct of a man of steady wisdom. What are the characteristics of a man of stable mind? He is neither affected by pain nor by pleasure; he is not agitated amidst pain and is without craving amidst pleasures. He is free from attachment, free from fear and anger.

Spriha implies a thirst for pleasures already being enjoyed. *Vigat-spriha* means one whose thirst for such pleasures has completely ceased to exist.

Vita-raga-bhaya-krodha means freedom from attachment, fear and anger. When one is able to establish the mind, keeping it free from agitations during the moments of pain, then and only then, fear and anger can be controlled. To become free from attachment one must be unagitated during unhappiness and free from thirst during moments of pleasure. As long as agitation and craving exist, attachment, fear and anger exist. He who is unagitated in pain and beyond thirst during enjoyment, be assured, it is he who is free from attachment, fear and anger.

Muni is he whose mind delights in the self, he who has silenced his mind. *Muni* is developed from *mouna*, which means 'to keep quiet'. *Mouna* is of different kinds, such as simple silence, indifferent silence, complete silence, silence with the suspension of mental activities, silence with awareness and silence with the absence of thought process.

These are the traits of a man of stable mind unaffected in pleasure and pain, free from attachment, fear and anger.

Sloka 57

Chapter 2

यः सर्वत्रानभिस्नेहस्तत्तत्प्राप्य शुभाशुभम्।
नाभिनन्दति न द्वेष्टि तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥

Translation

He who is unattached everywhere, who is neither delighted with good nor dejected in evil, neither rejoicing nor disliking, that man is established in intuition and fixed in wisdom.

Word-to-word meaning

Yah: he who; *sarvatra*: everywhere; *an-abhi-snehah*: without attachment (*an*: no; *sneha*: attachment, affection; *anabhi*: without); *tattat*: that whatever; *prapya*: having obtained,

achieved, received; *shubha*: pleasant, good, auspicious; *ashubham*: bad, unpleasant, evil; *nabhi-nandati na-dweshti*: neither rejoices nor hates; *tasya*: his, of him; *prajna*: intuition, intelligence, wisdom; *pratishthita*: established, is fixed.

Explanation

Arjuna asks how does the man of wisdom contact the external world? He is not a creature of circumstances. He is always and everywhere without attachment. On meeting with anything, either good or bad, he neither delights nor hates. His wisdom is poised and steady. Being non-attached, everywhere, in all conditions, neither rejoicing nor disliking, such a man is perfectly established in intuition. He maintains an attitude of *sakshi*, a spiritual state of witnessing. As one witnesses a game, a picture, the pain and pleasure of others, so does he witness his own self. This attitude keeps him in perfect harmony within himself. Such a person is steady in intuition, is a silent and unaffected witness to all the happenings within and without.

Sloka 58

Chapter 2

यदा संहरते चायं कूर्मोऽङ्गानीव सर्वशः ।
इन्द्रियाणीन्द्रियार्थेभ्यस्तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥

Translation

When such a person completely withdraws his senses from their respective objects, as a tortoise withdraws his limbs into his shell from all sides and rests within, then that person has achieved steadiness of wisdom.

Word-to-word meaning

Yada: when; *samharate*: withdraws completely, takes away; *chayam-cha ayam*: and this; *kurmonganeewa*, i.e. *kurma-angani-eewa*: just like the limbs of a tortoise; *sarvashah*: from everywhere, from every quarter; *indriyani*: senses; (*indriya*: sense; *artha*: purpose, object); *indriya-rthe-bhyah*: from sense

objects; *tasya*: of him; *prajna*: wisdom, intuition; *pratishthita*: is steadied, established.

Explanation

As a tortoise spontaneously draws its limbs within the shell against possible harm and danger, so a person established in intuition practises *pratyahara*, the complete withdrawing of the senses from all sense objects.

The literal meaning of *pratyahara* is retreat or return. *Prati* means return or about turn. *Ahara* means food, feeding, enjoying. Thus, *pratyahara* means about to turn from food, from feeding, from enjoyments. As the cows go out to pasture in the early morning, so they return home at dusk. It is this act of returning that is *pratyahara*. Likewise, as the senses are pulled and exercised, attached to various sense objects during the daytime, so too, at the time of meditation, the senses are withdrawn from these objects. *Pratyahara* in yoga is an act of returning within and getting away from the world during the spiritual practices.

Indriya means both senses and medium. Anything which is a medium for an action or act is *indriya*. The medium of speech is the tongue and above the physical *indriyas* is the mind. These *indriyas* are inert by themselves. It is the mind that manifests them through the senses in the form of speech, sight, sound, smell and touch.

He who practises *pratyahara* is as if dead to the world. He is not affected by outside vibrations. By mere willing he brings his senses under perfect control. Such a man becomes steady in wisdom.

विषया विनिवर्तन्ते निराहारस्य देहिनः ।
रसवर्जं रसोऽप्यस्य परं दृष्ट्वा निवर्तते ॥

Translation

In the body of those who live without feeding the senses, the sense objects cease to act and only the longing remains. After obtaining the vision of the Supreme, even this longing ceases to exist.

Word-to-word meaning

Vishaya: objects of the senses. It is a word appearing often in yogic literature. It is used in correspondence with man; *vini-vartante*: ceases to exist, ceases to behave, ceases to move, turns away; (*vartante* means lives, behaves, acts, moves. Adding *ni* it means, does not live, does not act, does not behave or does not move. Adding *vi*, it means, completely); *niraharasya*: a person who fasts, both physically and mentally; (a person who does not feed his five senses is said to be *nirahar*; *ni* means negation; *ahara* means food); *dehinah*: of the body, that which is destined to be burnt; (this word is derived from *daha*, an act of burning); *rasavarjam*: except the taste; (*rasa*: the existence of taste, interest, essence. When the senses in the body are starved, they cease to exist); *raso-pyasya* – *rasaha*, *api*, *asya*: even his longing; *param*: a state which is beyond the senses, mind, intellect, psychic capacity, occult powers and intuition. It is supreme and beyond all categories; *drishtva*: having seen inwardly and not through the physical eyes; (*drish*: to see); *nivartate*: *ni*, *vartate*: does not act, turns away.

Explanation

For the man who practises abstinence by not feeding his senses, the sense cravings cease to operate, but the longing and taste for them remain. This longing also ceases to exist, on beholding the Supreme.

This particular sloka is the central theme of the *Gita*. It is the problem that is posed throughout the chapters of *Gita*. Krishna is aware that the so-called act of withdrawal from sense objects does not imply automatic cessation of longing for the sense objects. By nourishing the senses the taste and the longing increases. Enjoyment of sense objects increases the weight of karmas, consequently the tensions, which in turn make the mind and sense organs weak. The removal of oneself or withdrawal of oneself from sense objects does not mean automatic cessation of longing and taste for the sense objects. What is the proper method then? How can one safely function in the realm of the senses?

Lord Krishna gives the answer. Through rational adjustment and understanding, a middle path, a golden middle road, must be taken. There, the capacity of understanding and discrimination still functions. There, is neither renunciation of senses nor accelerating of the sense experiences. It is existence with rational adjustment, meeting every existing situation with rational understanding, rational awareness and rational withdrawal. This therefore is the proper method of dealing with the senses.

With the knowledge of the Supreme, the wandering mind and the senses are finally vanquished. Until this vision of the Supreme is accomplished, Lord Krishna advocates a rational understanding and withdrawal of the senses, always associating the senses with the sublime.

Sloka 60

Chapter 2

यततो ह्यपि कौन्तेय पुरुषस्य विपश्चितः ।
इन्द्रियाणि प्रमाथीनि हरन्ति प्रसभं मनः ॥

Translation

The senses, whose force is irresistible at times, carry the mind away, even of a wise man who has been constantly engaging in self-control.

Word-to-word meaning

Yatato: one who is practising self-control, one who has been making efforts to control his senses, the striving man; *he*: indeed; *api*: even, also; *kaunteya*: Arjuna, son of Kunti; *purushasya*: of man; *vipaschitah*: of the wise man; *indriyani*: the senses; *pramatheeni*: powerfully turbulent, full of intoxicated nature, overwhelming; *haranti*: carry away, take away; *prasabham*: forcibly, violently; *manah*: the mind.

Explanation

Turbulent and treacherous are the senses, Arjuna, and irresistible is their force. The indriyas can carry the mind far from its objective. Even the wise man, the man who has practised self-control, cannot resist these forceful indriyas. The indriyas carry the mind away from the central object of meditation and contemplation. Control of the senses, therefore, is a prerequisite to calming the turbulent indriyas. Conquest of the senses is the major warfare of the spiritual aspirant. Blessed is he who has harnessed and controlled the senses. It is he who shall reach his spiritual destination.

Sloka 61

Chapter 2

तानि सर्वाणि संयम्य युक्त आसीत मत्परः ।
वशे हि यस्येन्द्रियाणि तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥

Translation

Having controlled (restrained) them (all the senses), he should sit for meditation, focussed on Me as the supreme goal. His wisdom (intuition) is steady whose senses are under control.

Word-to-word meaning

Tani: them (indriyas); *sarvani*: all (indriyas); *samyamya*: having absolutely controlled, restrained; *yukta*: connected, joined, two or more things becoming one; *sita*: should sit; *matparah*: the mind devoted to me, intent on me; *vashe*: under control;

hi: indeed; *yasya*: whose; *indriyani*: senses; *tasya*: his; *prajna*: intuition, wisdom; *pratisthita*: established, settled.

Explanation

Having controlled the indriyas, let the entire mind be dedicated to Me. Indeed this man is established in wisdom, whose senses are under subjugation. He should eradicate unwanted sense pleasures by replacing them with a state of absorption in the Supreme. As identity with the Supreme deepens, so the wild and restless mind becomes tame and steady and constant in intuition.

Yukta means connected, joined, plugged, coupled. When yoga is achieved it is called yukta. The root *yuj* means to join. From *yuj* is derived yoga, two things or more becoming one without losing their identity. Therefore, *yoga* means both adding to and joining. The three categories of yoga aspirants are:

- *Arurukshu*: an aspirant desirous of climbing the steps of yoga;
- *Yogarudha*: an aspirant already walking the path of yoga;
- *Yukta*: an aspirant who has realized and completed the path of yoga.

Blessed is he who has tamed his indriyas, who has remained with steadfast gaze on Me alone.

Sloka 62

Chapter 2

ध्यायतो विषयान्मुंसः सङ्गस्तेषूपजायते ।
सङ्गात्सञ्जायते कामः कामात्क्रोधोऽभिजायते ॥

Translation

A man, while thinking of sense objects, develops attachment for those objects. From sanga desire is born and from desire, anger.

Word-to-word meaning

Dhyayatah: while thinking, dwelling, brooding upon; *vishayan*: on objects (of the senses); *pumsah*: of a person, a man; *sangah*:

attachment, togetherness; *teshu*: from them; *upajayate*: born, development, birth of the new from the old, arises; *sangat*: from the company, attachment, union of; *sanjayate*: is born; *kamah*: desire; *kamat*: from desire; *krodha*: anger; *abhi-jayate*: arises, is born.

Explanation

When a man dwells upon the enticing aspects of sense objects, he automatically becomes attached to them, he yearns for them and desires their acquisition; and when he cannot through his efforts obtain them, he becomes frustrated and angry.

Dhyayatah, thinking, is derived from *dhyān*, awareness of. *Dhyāna* is the state where the mind is constantly aware of one thing, whether physical, mental or spiritual, objective or subjective. *Dhyāna*, therefore, is constant awareness, rather than a state of meditation.

Sanga means a state of two things being together, a state of attachment. *Satsanga* means good company, association or togetherness. *Asanga* means no company, association, togetherness; and *nisanga* means neither good nor bad company, it is togetherness itself.

Upajayate means it springs up, is born. *Upa* is a prefix. A process of being born is called *jayate*.

It is by contact of the mind and senses with sense objects that attachment is born. Constant dwelling upon and brooding over these sense objects brings pleasure and attachment to the senses. From attachment, anger and frustration develop, when the desires are unfulfilled and one cannot obtain the objects of attachment. Thus attraction breeds attachment and attachment breeds anger. This is the fate of the man who remains attached to the sense objects.

क्रोधाद्भवति सम्मोहः सम्मोहात्स्मृतिविभ्रमः ।
स्मृतिभ्रंशाद् बुद्धिनाशो बुद्धिनाशात्प्रणश्यति ॥

Translation

From anger arises delusion, from delusion confusion of memory, from confusion of memory loss of reason and from loss of reason complete ruin takes place.

Word-to-word meaning

Krodhat: anger compelled by a state of frustration; *bhavati*: becomes, is born, arises; *sammohah*: delusion, confusion, state of mental bewilderment, distraction, error in perception; *smriti*: memory, contents of the subconscious mind, all past associations; *smritivibhram*: confusion, loss in memory; (*vibhrama*: loss); *bhramashat*: total destruction, complete loss; *buddhi*: reason, intellect, inner sense of understanding; *nashat*: because of destruction of buddhi; *pranashyati*: complete destruction.

Explanation

Man, thinking upon the pleasurable objects of the senses, develops attachment for them and out of this attachment desire is born. From desire anger proceeds, as he is unable to obtain the objects of his attachment, and in anger confusion of thought arises followed by confusion in memory. With confusion in memory the *buddhi*, reason, intellect, is destroyed and resulting from destruction of buddhi, all is destroyed in life.

Krodhat means from anger, the basic root being *krodha*, to get angry. The anger implied in *krodha* is coupled with a sense of hatred for frustration, ill will, and it is this decisive attitude of anger that takes away the consciousness beyond all sense of control.

Sammoha means delusion. *Sam* is the prefix and *moha* means delusion, distraction. It is a mental condition of

avidya, ignorance, in which the mind is in utter confusion, is not aware of the existence of real substance and lacks correct understanding.

Smriti means memory, derived from the basic root *smri*, to recollect, bring forth. *Smriti* means the subconscious material and individual power of judgement and coordination. *Smriti-vidhrama* means confusion in memory and *smriti-bhramshat* means total destruction, complete loss. Therefore, from anger comes the confusion and from confusion loss of memory. *Buddhi* means reason, intellect and there are four forms of intellectual expression:

- *Ku-buddhi*: bad understanding
- *Dur-buddhi*: perverted understanding
- *Buddhi*: normal understanding
- *Su-buddhi*: good understanding.

It is said that the basis for the expression of *buddhi* is *smriti* and the basis for the manifestation of *smriti* is peace of mind and freedom from hatred. When one is free from hatred, he understands things properly, his *smriti*, memory, is in tact, and the *buddhi* functions well. Conversely, through hate and anger, delusion springs, through delusion loss of memory and from loss of memory total destruction of the *buddhi*.

Pranashyati means perished, completely destroyed. *Nashta* means finished, from *nasha*, to go, pass by, go away. Therefore, *pranashyati* means that thing which is destroyed, finished and extinct for ever.

Once a seed is burnt it can no longer germinate. In the same manner, once the *buddhi* is lost, man is lost and his spiritual evolution is arrested. Thus anger must be kept in check, and attachment to sense objects must cease. It is through desire and attachment to sense objects that the hateful anger arises; thus man is totally arrested in his spiritual development.

रागद्वेषवियुक्तैस्तु विषयानिन्द्रियैश्चरन् ।
आत्मवश्यैर्विधेयात्मा प्रसादमधिगच्छति ॥

Translation

But the self-controlled practitioner, while enjoying the various sense objects through the medium of his disciplined senses, free from likes and dislikes, attains peace of mind.

Word-to-word meaning

Raga: attachment, likes; *dvesha*: dislikes; *viyuktah*: separated; *tu*: but; *vishayan*: objects; *indriyaih*: by the indriyas, through the senses, with the senses; *charan*: roaming, wandering, moving, walking; *atma*: self; *vashyaih*: control, self-restraint; *atma-vashyaih*: by the person who has self-control, by one who has controlled the self; *vidheya*: established, centred, living in; *atma*: higher self; *vidheyatma*: one rooted in the self; *prasadam*: happiness, contentment, peace; *adhi-gachchati*: goes towards, attains.

Explanation

The disciplined yogi, the self-controlled man, moves among the sense objects with his mind always under the command of his will. Therefore, his senses are untainted by attraction and aversion. He lives in the self, therefore, the tranquillity of his mind is never disturbed. He can enjoy sense objects, but he is not controlled by them, for he holds the senses within his rational control.

It is the contention of the *Gita* to impart to the spiritual aspirant a new concept of dealing with sense pleasures. Usually it is said that the spiritual aspirant should not desire sense pleasures, should subdue and renounce his senses, because he who indulges in sense pleasures is lost forever. But the *Gita* maintains that enjoyment of sense objects is necessary and must be done in order that one's karmas may be worked out, and there is a specific way to enjoy the

senses – the way of perfect rational control. The *Gita* holds that the strings of the senses should be in your hand with absolute control and then you may enjoy various objects of the world through the senses.

Prasadam means absolute happiness. *Prasad* means a blessed food offering, bestowing happiness on the receiver. Thus prasadam bestows absolute happiness.

The senses are instruments in the hands of the mind. When the mind constantly reflects on atman, it becomes steady in identification with the true self, and if one must experience objects of sense pleasure in order to exhaust one's karmas, let the mind do so with perfect rational control over the senses.

Sloka 65

Chapter 2

प्रसादे सर्वदुःखानां हानिरस्योपजायते ।
प्रसन्नचेतसो ह्याशु बुद्धिः पर्यवतिष्ठते ॥

Translation

In perfect peace all pain and sorrow is gone. He whose intellect is anchored in tranquillity happily becomes steady from all sides.

Word-to-word meaning

Prasade: in the state of happiness, peace; *sarva*: all; *dukhanam*: pains; *hanihi*: loss, destruction; *asya*: of this man, of him; *upajayate*: arises, takes place, happens; *prasanna*: of the tranquil, happy, peaceful; *chetasah*: feeling, awareness, consciousness; *prasanna-chetasah*: of the person who is happy, peaceful; *hyashu*: (*hi*) indeed, (*ashu*) quickly, immediately, instantaneously; *buddhi*: intellect; *paryawa-tishthate*: (*pari*) all round, (*awa*) firmly, (*tishthate*) fixed, established.

Explanation

Desire for sense objects ceases when the mind is at peace, and when the mind is happy, tranquil and at peace, man has

perfect mastery over buddhi, that is, reason and intellect. Such a person whose intellect rests in the self in perfect peace is said to be firmly established from all sides. *Sarva-dukhanam* means all the pains, and there are three types of bad experiences, or pains:

1. *Adhyatmic* pains pertaining to the deeper realms of the unconscious;
2. *Adhidaivic* pains pertaining to the astral or divine realms;
3. *Adhibhautic* pains pertaining to the physical realms.

Adhyatmic dukha means worries, anxieties, sleeplessness, depression, deep neurosis. *Adhidaivic dukha* means earthquakes, floods, wars. *Adhibhautic dukha* means physical diseases, such as polio, colds, fevers, aches, paralysis, cancer, ulcer.

Therefore, *sarva-dukhanam* means all those pains which man experiences, but does not relish. The final conviction of the *Gita* is that the moment a person becomes disciplined, free from likes and dislikes, attaining peace in his mind, all the complexes, inhibitions and other psychic abnormal behaviours are dispelled.

Prasade means after having attained that peace. *Sarva dukhanam* means all the sorrows. *Hanihi* means ultimate destruction and *upajayate* means takes place. *Chetasaha* is derived from *chit* which means a higher knowledge, a higher consciousness. *Prasanna* is derived from *prasad*, so *prasanna-chetasaha* means a person who is happy and tranquil of mind. *Tishthate* is derived from *tishtha*, to sit, to be firm. *Buddhihi-paryaya-tishthate* means the intellect is positioned in tranquillity and happiness.

Thus the miseries of the body and mind come to an end when man's intellect abides in the self. No longer is there desire for sense objects, no thirst for pleasures, no fear of pains. His mind is rooted in the self, in atman, in perfect peace and perfect tranquillity.

नास्ति बुद्धिरयुक्तस्य न चायुक्तस्य भावना ।
न चाभावयतः शान्तिरशान्तस्य कुतः सुखम् ॥

Translation

There is neither wisdom, nor meditation for him who is unsteady of mind. There is no peace for him who does not meditate and without peace how can he have happiness?

Word-to-word meaning

Na: not; *asti*: is; *buddhihi*: intellect, knowledge; *ayuktasya*: of one who is not steady; *na*: not; *chayuktasya*: (*cha*) and, (*ayuktasya*) of one who is unsteady; *bhavana*: feeling, meditation; *na*: not; *abhavayatah*: of non-belief, of the unmeditative; *shantihi*: peace; *ashantasya*: of one who is without peace; *kutah*: from where, whence; *sukham*: good experience, happiness, agreeable experience.

Explanation

He who cannot steady his mind, cannot practise meditation, and he who does not meditate, can never realize the self. There is no happiness, no peace of mind, no liberation or *moksha* for him whose mind is restless, whose mind hankers after and moves in company with the senses. He shall not obtain peace and he shall not acquire knowledge of the self. The uncontrollable mind is neither capable of determinate reasoning nor sustained devotion. The unsteady mind brings man to destruction.

Nasti means is not. If you add the syllable *ka* it becomes *nastika*, which means an atheist, one who does not believe in the existence of God. One who believes in God is called *astik*. *Bhavana* means feeling, derived from the word *bhava*, to be, to emerge, to spring up. Any feeling that emerges from within you is your *bhavana*. *Shantihi* means peace, derived from the basic root *sham*, meaning peace, all quiet. A person without a steady attitude has no *shantihi* and he who has no peace cannot have happiness.

It is true that man desires peace of mind. He searches continually for happiness, but he is unwilling to put forth the correct effort to achieve these ends. The mind must be controlled and the senses must be disciplined. Then a sublime attitude towards all things can be formulated and as a result of this steadiness in attitude, peace of mind will develop. It follows, with peace of mind, happiness is an automatic outcome.

Thus Lord Krishna explains to Arjuna the harm that comes to him who allows the mind to wander.

Sloka 67

Chapter 2

इन्द्रियाणां हि चरतां यन्मनोऽनुविधीयते ।
तदस्य हरति प्रज्ञां वायुर्नावमिवाम्भसि ॥

Translation

As the wind pushes the boat upon the water, so the wandering senses take the mind away from intuition.

Word-to-word meaning

Indriyanam: of the senses; *hi*: indeed, for; *charatam*: while moving, roaming, wandering; *yat*: that which; *manaha*: mind; *anu-vidheeyate*: follows, joined with; *tat*: that; *asya*: of his; *harati*: carries, takes, drives away; *prajnam*: intuition, discrimination; *vayuh*: the wind; *nawam*: boat; *iwa*: just as, just like; *ambhasi*: in or upon the water.

Explanation

Just as the boat without a rudder is carried away by the wind, so the mind carries the aspirant from his spiritual aim, and the restless anarchy of the senses follows. The senses wander from object to object. Without discipline the mind aspiring to obtain intuition is carried far from the goal by the force of these indriyas. Therefore, discipline of the senses is required to change the mental structure through austerities, which is one medium for this discipline. For a jnana yogi

there is yet another means to achieve sense control. It is the rational approach, the attitude of witnessing the senses, non-doership, non-enjoyership, an attitude of standing apart with detachment.

Whatever be the method of the spiritual aspirant the end must be kept in view. The roving senses must be held under perfect discipline and control. Then, the mind may be led with discrimination towards the ultimate objective, knowledge of the self and union with the atman. Thus Lord Krishna explains to Arjuna why one without a disciplined mind can never achieve illumination.

Sloka 68

Chapter 2

तस्माद्यस्य महाबाहो निगृहीतानि सर्वशः ।
इन्द्रियाणीन्द्रियार्थेभ्यस्तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥

Translation

Therefore, O mighty-armed Arjuna, his intuition is established and remains undisturbed, whose senses are held together, completely restrained from sense objects.

Word-to-word meaning

Tasmat: therefore (conclusion); *yasya*: whose; *mahabaho*: O mighty-armed (Arjuna); *nigrihitani*: completely controlled, restrained; (*ni*: completely, *grihitani*: to catch, to hold); *sarvashah*: completely from all directions; *indriyani*: the senses; *indriyar-thebhyah*: from the sense objects; *tasya*: his; *prajna*: wisdom, knowledge, intuition; *pratishthita*: established, steady.

Explanation

The senses, when allowed freedom of action, will carry the mind far from its goal as the wind carries away the rudderless boat. He whose wisdom is steady and whose intuition is established has his senses completely under control.

Senses are the manifestation of energy within man and this energy must be held together and channelled; it must be

fully used so as not to leave room for wandering movement and sensual freedom. To hold these indriyas, preoccupation, work, some kind of engagement for the senses must be ever exercised. There may be no idle moments. The senses must be fully occupied always. Then, the senses and mind rest in control and the aspirant is able to direct the mind towards its highest aim.

Tasmat means therefore. In the *Gita*, *tasmat* implies the particular sloka should be considered as a conclusion. *Nigrihitani* means completely controlled. *Ni* is a prefix meaning completely, and *grihitani* is derived from the basic idea *grih*, to catch, to accept, to possess, to hold.

The central theme of this sloka is that the spiritual aspirant must ever keep his senses engaged in order that they may be at the command of the aspirant's will. In this way the indriyas are controlled and disciplined. Thus Lord Krishna tells Arjuna how the senses must be handled.

Sloka 69

Chapter 2

या निशा सर्वभूतानां तस्यां जागर्ति संयमी।
यस्यां जाग्रति भूतानि सा निशा पश्यतो मुनेः ॥

Translation

That which to all beings is night, to the self-controlled man it is day, he remains awake and aware; and when all beings are awake, that for the muni is as night.

Word-to-word meaning

Ya: which; *nisha*: night; *sarvabhutanam*: of all beings; *tasyam*: in that (used for night, in that state of night); *jaग्रति*: keeps awake, remains awake. *samyami*: one who has controlled himself completely, the self-controlled; (*sam*: prefix; *yami*: restrainer, controller, regulator); *yasyam*: in which; *jaग्रति*: remain awake; *bhutan*: all beings; *sa*: that; *nisha*: night; *pashyato*: having seen, of the seeing; *munehe*: of the muni, one who has achieved the inner silence.

Explanation

To the sage who is enlightened, knowledge of the self is day; the self is the light of lights and in this perpetual light he dwells. But to the worldly minded experiencing objects of sensual enjoyment is day and light for him. Brahman, atman, the self is not known to him and so, for him, life in the spirit is night. Only the enlightened one is cognizant of the supreme reality, that constant light where all is day. The worldly phenomena of the senses do not exist for him. Therefore, it is for him as night.

The most important word in this sloka is *nisha*, night, and it must be clearly understood in its philosophical context. *Nisha* means a state of ignorance, a lack of perception and understanding of ultimate reality. The veils of ignorance and *maya* hide the true knowledge of the self and so the average man remains in darkness, *avidya*. This darkness of *avidya* is known as *nisha*.

No two men see the same thing with the same eyes. Only the muni who has conquered the senses and has awakened to the divine consciousness can see the true light. Other men are lost in the daylight of sense pleasures and the dark night of ignorance. Thus Lord Krishna explains to Arjuna the difference in understanding between the muni whose senses are under control and the man who abides in sense pleasures and *avidya*.

Sloka 70

Chapter 2

आपूर्यमाणमचलप्रतिष्ठं समुद्रमापः प्रविशन्ति यद्वत् ।
तद्वत्कामा यं प्रविशन्ति सर्वे स शान्तिमाप्नोति न कामकामी ॥

Translation

That man attains peace in whom all desires are consumed, who craves not, even as the water enters the full ocean disturbing it not.

Word-to-word meaning

Apuryamanam: filled from all sides, that which is full on all sides; *achala*: without movement; *pratishtham*: established, remains unmoved; *samudram*: ocean; *apah*: water; *pravishanti*: enters in; *yadvat*: even as; *tadvat*: so, likewise; *kamah*: desires; *yam*: unto whom; *pravishanti*: enters in, gets in; *sarve*: all; *sah*: he; *shantim*: peace; *apnoti*: attains, receives, obtains; *na*: no; *kama*: desire; *kami*: desirous of desire.

Explanation

He who remains established in the self in perfect peace is not affected by the onrush of desires entering from all sides. He is as the ocean that remains unperturbed as the waters flow into it. The enlightened one attains liberation and peace, not he who craves the company of sensual objects. The mind of the liberated one is like the ocean, a vast waveless consciousness unmodified by desires.

Sloka 70 is the philosophy for the ordinary man, he who has to face the serious problems of life, who has to struggle to transcend the weaknesses and cruelties of life. To such a man the *Gita* speaks. It says, fulfil the obligations of the senses and mind with perfect equilibrium, exactly in the way the ocean receives water from the rivers. Live in the world of senses, exhaust your karmas, but do so with perfect control and mental equilibrium. In this way the average man, by rational awareness, maintains control of the senses and the mind. He lives in the world and with the senses, but he is master of them by maintaining perfect mental equilibrium. Thus Lord Krishna instructs Arjuna in the abundance of light given to him who has the senses under control.

विहाय कामान्यः सर्वान्पुमांश्चरति निःस्पृहः ।
निर्ममो निरहङ्कारः स शान्तिमधिगच्छति ॥

Translation

That man attains peace who, abandoning all desires, lives in the world without craving for enjoyments, without the sense of me and mine, without egoism.

Word-to-word meaning

Vihaya: giving up, abandoning; *kaman*: desires; *yah*: that, he who; *sarvan*: all; *puman*: purusha, man; *charati*: moves, wanders, roams; *nisprisah*: without hankerings, free from longing (*nih*: without; *sprihah*: a condition of thirst, of longing, of craving); *nirman*: without sense of mine; *nirahankarah*: without egoism; *sa*: he; *shantim*: peace; *adhi-gacchati*: attains, goes to.

Explanation

With the longing for worldly desires man cannot attain peace. Desire is the root cause of ego, the cause of the assertion of me and mine. To the extent that longing is arrested and craving ceases, calmness and peace come to the mind. One must allow his nature to function, and by sense control, by yogic purification of the mind and body, by cessation of desire and craving, and by freedom from attachment and egoism, he attains this peace of mind. Blessed is he who is free from the bondages of worldly desire. Thus Lord Krishna tells Arjuna how he may attain that state of perfect peace.

एषा ब्राह्मी स्थितिः पार्थ नैनां प्राप्य विमुह्यति ।
स्थित्वास्यामन्तकालेऽपि ब्रह्मनिर्वाणमृच्छति ॥

Translation

Having attained this brahmic state, O Son of Partha, one is not deluded, confused and bewildered. Being thus established, even at the end of life, one attains union with Brahman.

Word-to-word meaning

Esha: this, such, such as this; *brahmi*: of Brahman, of a person having God-realization; *sthitih*: state, establishment; *partha*: O Arjuna; *nainam*: not this; *prapya*: having obtained, attained, achieved; *vimuhyati*: is deluded, confused, bewildered; *sthitva*: being established; *asyam*: in this state; *anta-kale*: at the end; *api*: also, even; *Brahma*: supreme being, cosmic being; *nirvanam*: oneness with Brahman, passing away of avidya; *ricchati*: attains, reaches to.

Explanation

O Arjuna, such is the state of the liberated soul, established in Brahman alone, who after attaining moksha at life's end, experiences brahmic bliss, after which he no more embodies.

Brahmi is derived from the word Brahman, and Brahman is derived from the basic root *brihan*, meaning to extend, to enlarge, to grow, meaning an ever expanding process. Brahman does not mean God in the sense of a personal being. Etymologically and philosophically Brahman means a cosmic process, a universal process which is ever expanding. Thus the process of creation is ever expanding and Brahman denotes this universal cosmic process. Therefore, the word *brahmi* in this context means a person who has experienced the state of Brahman, the experience of the supreme creative process, a person who has had experience of infinity and eternity.

Enam prapya na vimuhyati means having obtained this state one is not confused, one is not deluded, one does not make errors in perception or vision. *Nirvan* is used in the sense of going away or departure, but since the time of Buddha the word *nirvan* has had a different connotation. *Brahma nirvanam* is a state transcending the mind and intellect, a state of the passing away of avidya.

A liberated man always behaves in a manner prescribed in these slokas of the *Gita*. Here is a very clear-cut definition. He moves in the world fulfilling all obligations with discipline, with absolute control and with freedom from raga and dwesha. He is not affected by the fluctuations of the mind, the three gunas of prakriti.

O Arjuna, this is the state of the liberated man and if one has reached this high state he cannot be overcome by delusion. Thus the yoga of knowledge is given to Arjuna by Lord Krishna.

Synopsis

We follow now, step by step, the central theme of these nineteen slokas as Lord Krishna instructs Arjuna in the yoga of knowledge to become a liberated man.

Sloka 54

Arjuna asks Lord Krishna: What is the definition of one who is steady in intuition, established in his buddhi and merged in the superconscious state, having attained samadhi? How does he speak, how does he sit and how does he walk?

Sloka 55

The Lord said: When a person has completely destroyed all his inner desires, his deepest subconscious desires, when he is contented within his own self and through his own self, then he is established in intuition and stable in wisdom.

Sloka 56

The man whose mind is not agitated by sorrows, whose thirst for pleasure is quenched and who is free from attachments, fear and anger, he is called stable of mind.

Sloka 57

He who is everywhere unattached, who is not delighted with good nor dejected in evil, neither rejoicing nor disliking, that man is established in intuition and fixed in wisdom.

Sloka 58

When a person withdraws his senses, as a tortoise withdraws his limbs into his shell and rests within, so then that person has achieved steadiness of wisdom.

Sloka 59

In the body of those who live without feeding the senses, the sense objects cease to act and only the longing remains. After obtaining vision of the Supreme, even the longing ceases to exist.

Sloka 60

The senses, whose force is irresistible at times, carry the mind away, even in the case of a wise man who has been constantly engaging in self-control.

Sloka 61

Having controlled, restrained them all (the senses) he should sit for meditation, focussed on Me as the supreme goal. His wisdom and intuition is steady whose senses are under control.

Sloka 62

A man, while thinking of sense objects, develops *sanga*, attachment for these objects. From *sanga*, *kama*, desire is born and from desire, anger arises.

Sloka 63

From anger arises delusion, from delusion confusion of memory, from confusion of memory loss of reason and from loss of reason complete ruin takes place.

Sloka 64

The self-controlled practitioner, while enjoying the various sense objects through the medium of his disciplined senses, free from likes and dislikes, attains peace of mind.

Sloka 65

In perfect peace all pain and sorrow is gone. He whose intellect is anchored in tranquillity happily becomes steady from all sides.

Sloka 66

There is neither wisdom nor meditation for him who is unsteady of mind. There is no peace for him who does not meditate and without peace how can he have happiness.

Sloka 67

As the wind pushes the boat upon the water, so the wandering senses take the mind away from intuition.

Sloka 68

Therefore, O Mighty-armed Arjuna, his intuition is established and remains undisturbed, whose senses are held together, completely restrained from sense objects.

Sloka 69

That which to all beings is night, to the self-controlled it is day, he remains awake and aware, and when all beings are awake, that for the muni is as night.

Sloka 70

That man attains peace, in whom all desires are consumed, who craves not, even as the water enters the full ocean disturbing it not.

Sloka 71

That man attains peace who, abandoning all desires, lives in the world without craving for enjoyments, without the sense of me and mine, without egoism.

Sloka 72

Having obtained this brahmic state, O Son of Partha, one is not deluded, confused, bewildered. Being thus established, even at the end of life one attains union with Brahman.

The state of the liberated man is the highest state possible for human beings to attain. The path is a difficult one and requires willpower and perseverance, but everyone can follow it. The light is already within, and we have the instructions to reach this light. Let him ponder well these sacred slokas for in them lies the key to liberation.



Wisdom of the Gita

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First published in 1968, *Wisdom of the Gita* is a compilation of notes on the last eight slokas of the twelfth chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita* arising from the daily lessons on the *Bhagavad Gita* given to students by Swami Satyananda “for whom words are not enough to express the deep devotion they all cherish for him.”

Wisdom of the Gita

Introduction

In the twelfth chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita*, Lord Krishna gives instructions to Arjuna regarding bhakti yoga. The last eight slokas of this chapter comprise the very essence of bhakti and bhakta. What should be the definition of a bhakta and how should we understand him in his spiritual nature – all this is dealt with in the last eight slokas.

There is a general understanding that bhakti is necessarily associated with ecstatic trance and hysteric singing of kirtans in a loud voice, but you will find in these slokas that the life of a bhakta is guided by practical actions of responsibility, nobility, grace and dignity. It is not only singing and repeating God's name which is the decisive factor in the life of a bhakta, but it is his behaviour, qualities and actions in relation to other beings, which finally decide the issue. I name these eight slokas *amritashtaka*, *amrit* meaning nectar, and *ashtaka* a group of eight.

Slokas 13–14

Chapter 12

अद्वेष्टा सर्वभूतानां मैत्रः करुण एव च ।
निर्ममो निरहंकारः समदुःखसुखः क्षमी ॥ 13 ॥
संतुष्टः सततं योगी यतात्मा दृढनिश्चयः ।
मय्यर्पितमनोबुद्धिर्यो मद्भक्तः स मे प्रियः ॥ 14 ॥

Word-to-word meaning

A-dweshta: non-jealous; *sarva*: all; *bhootaanaam*: of beings (*sarva bhootaanaam*: of all beings); *maitreh*: friend; *karunah*: compassion, kindness for those who are suffering; *eva*: also; *cha*: and; *nirmamah*: not mine, without mineness; *nirahankarah*: egoless, without egoism (*nir*: no; *aham*: I; *kara*: to do); *sama*: equal; *dukkhah*: pain; *sukhaha*: pleasure (*sama-dukkha-sukhaha*: balanced in pain and pleasure); *kshami*: forbearance, capable of tolerance and granting pardons. (12:13)

Santushtaha: completely contented; *satatam*: continuously; *yogi*: in communion with the Cosmic Consciousness; *yata*: controlled; *atma*: a combination of senses, body and mind, here does not mean the soul (*yataatma*: self-controlled); *dridha*: firm, stable, unshakable; *nischayah*: determination, decision, resolve; *mayi*: in Me; *arpita*: offered, surrendered, presented, dedicated; *manah*: mind, thinking instrument; *buddhihi*: instrument of reasoning; *yaha*: he who; *mat*: mine; *bhaktaha*: devotee; *saha*: he; *me*: to me; *priyah*: dear. (12:14)

Translation

That bhakta of Mine who is non-jealous, friend of all beings, without notion of mineness, free from ego, balanced in pain and pleasure, and tolerant; (12:13)

Continuously contented and in communion with Cosmic Consciousness, self-controlled and firmly determined, dedicated to Me in mind and buddhi, is dear to Me. (12:14)

Explanation

The two slokas above are revelations to Arjuna that a devotee of God who is full of qualities as pronounced is dear to Him. By this we understand that a bhakta has got to be much more than a lover of God.

Dwesha is a strong current – stronger than hatred, much more intense than jealousy. *Dwish* is the root-word, which means ‘to hate, to be jealous, to renounce, to set aside’. Hatred and jealousy do not exactly convey the meaning

of dwesha. When you are overpowered by dwesha against somebody, you have every kind of intolerance for his achievements. It is the opposite complex of *raga*, attraction.

Santushtah is a combination of *sam-tushtaha*, complete contentment, *tushtaha* is derived from the basic root-word *tush* meaning cessation of thirst. Thirst here means craving for enjoyments, like *spriha*, desire. Hence, complete absence of all kinds of cravings makes a bhakta *santushtah*.

This should mean that contentment does not develop any desire even in the form of a seed. It is not what we understand by satisfaction or gratification. The state of contentment does not necessarily dawn after the cravings have been fulfilled, but, it is an outcome of realization that objects can never gratify the senses.

Satatam denotes that even as the Ganges has been flowing without any break, likewise the self-contentment should be without any break. The psychological process of contentment should not be obstructed by any kind of desires seeking gratification. This does not pertain to worldly pleasures alone, but even with the life you live. The *Bhagavad Gita* is not referring to momentary satisfaction of the senses, which is a state of nervous system, but of a psychic process which remains unfluctuated amidst sense gratifications and dissatisfactions of the lower self. *Satatam* should mean here the continuity of a higher state of mind. If the prosperity has given your mind a state of pleasure, then its absence should not create any change in the psychological process.

Atma has different meanings in relation to the context. It usually means: the innermost self, the invisible truth, the microcosmic truth, *jivatma*, but here it means the lower self, a combination of senses, body and mind.

यस्मान्नोद्विजते लोको लोकान्नोद्विजते च यः ।
हर्षामर्षभयोद्वेगैर्मुक्तो यः स च मे प्रियः ॥

Word-to-word meaning

Yasmaat: by whom; *no*: not; *uvijate*: is annoyed, is agitated; *lokah*: mass, people, society; *lokaat*: by the people; *no*: not; *udvijate*: is agitated; *cha*: and; *yaha*: he who; *harsha*: delight; *amarsha*: anger; *bhaya*: fear; *udvegaih*: agitation; *muktah*: free from bondage; *yah*: he who; *sah*: be; *cha*: and; *me priyah*: to Me, dear.

Translation

He is dear to Me, by whom the people are not disturbed, and who is not disturbed by the people, and who is free from delight, anger, fear and agitation.

Explanation

A bhakta should develop the feeling of God's presence, in all beings and manifest the same in actual practice. This should be done side by side with his personal love for God. It is not at all difficult to feel that the whole world is a manifestation of God. However, this is only a philosophical feeling and as such it will not serve the bhakta to the last point of realization.

It has already been said in the *Bhagavad Gita* that the people who worship God can be brought under four categories:

1. Those in distress who seek devotion;
2. Those who seek to know Him;
3. Those with a purpose in their mind who worship Him for wealth, progeny, success, and so on;
4. Those who love God in a spiritual sense, without any intention whatsoever.

All these types of bhaktas, if they practise the virtues enumerated herein, become very close to Him, but he

is closest and dearest to God who perceives Him in His immanent and transcendental aspects. It is not just enough if one merely practises the so-called social virtues; and also if one just practises the classical emotional bhakti. One will have to combine both aspects of bhakti. It is only when the two forms of bhakti are blended together that it becomes perfect.

Udvijate is derived from the root-word *ut-wega*, meaning upward speed, the upward speed of mental feelings. When you disturb someone, or annoy him, or tease him, then the state of mind is exploded and agitated; it is annoyance or agitation. It is not anger.

Lokah is used for a mass, people, a community, a society. *Yasmat lokah na udvijate* – by whom people are not agitated. This is a way of expression. It can be expressed as this – he who is not a source of annoyance to the world, he who does not create agitation among the people. In addition to his dedication to a life of realization of God, a bhakta should develop this social virtue with a double purpose, for social peace and for mental peace.

The word *mukta* means free. When the rope by which one is bound is taken off, one becomes mukta. When one is released from the prison, one becomes mukta. Therefore, mukta means a state of no bondage. In this context one should study jivanmukta and videhamukta. The freedom in the case of a bhakta constitutes freedom from delight and anger, fear and agitation; the changing conditions of the mind.

Sloka 16

Chapter 12

अनपेक्षः शुचिर्दक्ष उदासीनो गतव्यथः ।
सर्वारम्भपरित्यागी यो मद्भक्तः स मे प्रियः ॥

Word-to-word meaning

Anapeksha: one without expectations; *shuchih*: pure; *dakshah*: clever, capable, efficient, expert; *udaseenah*: indifferent,

impartial, sad, unconcerned; *gata*: gone; *vyathah*: pains, agonies; (*gata vyathah*: free from agonies); *sarva*: all; *arambha*: beginning of anything; *parityaagi*: total renunciation; *yaha*: who; *mad*: mine; *bhaktah*: devotee; *sa me priyah*: he is dear to Me.

Translation

That bhakta of Mine is dear to Me, who expects nothing from anyone, who is pure, impartial, devoid of agonies and who renounces the feeling of doership in all undertakings.

Explanation

Shuchih is developed from the word *shaucha*, purity. This constitutes one of the five niyamas of raja yoga. Purity is internal as well as external.

Udasinah is a state of mind free from the expressions of delight and joy. *Ut-asinah* means being seated above. The purpose is to show indifference.

Parityaagi is a combination of *pari*, absolutely, and *tyaagi*, renunciate.

Arambha should mean doership in all the undertakings.

Sarva arambha parityaagi literally means 'he who has completely renounced all the beginnings'. This expression means 'he who has renounced the feeling of doership in all the undertakings'.

The word *bhakta* is derived from the root-word *bhaj* which means 'to serve', and in a broader sense, 'to serve God and men'. By tradition, *bhakti* means prayers, worship, meditation and loving God's transcendental form, but in a broader sense, the word should mean service of God and men, as well as meditation on God and service of men.

Sloka 17

Chapter 12

यो न हृष्यति न द्वेष्टि न शोचति न काङ्क्षति ।
शुभाशुभपरित्यागी भक्तिमान्यः स मे प्रियः ॥

Word-to-word meaning

Yaha: he who; *na*: no; *hrishyati*: delight; *na dweshati*: does not hate; *no shochati*: does not grieve; *no kankshati*: does not desire; *shubha*: good; *ashubha*: bad; *parityaagi*: renouncer; *bhaktimaan*: full of bhakti; *yah*: he who; *sa me priyah*: he is dear to Me.

Translation

He who does not rejoice, does not hate, does not grieve, does not desire, that man, full of bhakti, who renounces the good and bad effects of his karma, is dear to Me.

Explanation

A bhakta should be able to have control over his temperamental reactions and impulses. To rejoice, to hate, to grieve, to desire and to be influenced by the effects of the karma is a natural and temperamental action of the jiva. Therefore, it is said that the bhakta must at least have that much self-control that he is able to go over these natural and temperamental impulses.

This is necessary in order to maintain mental peace, purity of heart, divinity in sattwa, and also for an undisturbed and unobstructed flow of bhakti. If a bhakta is affected every now and then by the fluctuating impulses of his nature, then maya will drag him down to lower planes of body, mind and senses, where he may become bound to the effects of prakriti and the three gunas.

Therefore, it is instructed that a bhakta should take care of his mental conditions while discharging the routine bhakti. If he ignores the mental conditions as many do, he is surely going to face an emotional crisis, ultimately resulting in a spiritual crisis. So, the narrow conception of bhakti should be broadened on these lines.

In the previous slokas, Arjuna was asked to integrate social virtues with individual bhakti and now, he is being asked to integrate individual mental peace with individual devotion.

समः शत्रौ च मित्रे च तथा मानापमानयोः ।
 शीतोष्णसुखदुःखेषु समः सङ्गविवर्जितः ॥ 18 ॥
 तुल्यनिन्दास्तुतिर्मैत्री संतुष्टो येन केनचित् ।
 अनिकेतः स्थिरमतिर्भक्तिमान्मे प्रियो नरः ॥ 19 ॥

Word-to-word meaning

Samah: equal; *shatrau*: with enemies; *cha*: and; *mitre*: to friend; *tatha*: likewise; *mana*: honour; *apamanayoh*: in dishonour; *man-apamanayoh*: in honour and in dishonour; *shita*: cold; *usna*: hot; *sukha*: pleasure; *dukha*: pain; *shita-ushna-sukha-dukheshu*: in cold and heat, in pleasure and pain; *samah*: equal; *sanga*: good company; *vivarjitah*: free (*sanga vivarjitah*: free from the association of worldly objects of attachment). (12:18)

Tulya: alike; *ninda*: criticism; *astutihi*: praise; *mauni*: a man in inner contemplation; *santushto*: contented; *yenakenachit*: by whatsoever; *a*: no; *aniketah*: homeless; *sthira*: established; *matih*: mind; *bhaktimaan*: full of bhakti; *me priyah*: is dear to Me; *narah*: man. (12:19)

Translation

That man, full of bhakti, is dear to Me, who is mentally balanced with friends and enemies, likewise in honour and dishonour, in heat and cold, in pleasure and pain, and free from the association of worldly objects. (12:18)

Unto whom the praise and reproach are alike, who is silent, contented with whatever he has, without attachment to home and fixed in mind. (12:19)

ये तु धर्म्यामृतमिदं यथोक्तं पर्युपासते ।
श्रद्धाधाना मत्परमा भक्तास्तेऽतीव मे प्रियाः ॥

Word-to-word meaning

Ye: those who; *tu*: indeed; *dharmya*: pious wisdom; *amritam*: nectar; *idam*: this; *yathoktam*: as told above; *paryupaasate*: (lit) fully executed; fully observed, fully worshipped; *shraddadhaanaa*: the faithful ones; *mat-paramaa*: devoted to Me; *bhaktaha*: devotees; *te*: they; *ateeva*: extremely; *me priyah*: dear to Me.

Translation

Those devotees who fully observe this nectar of pious wisdom, as told above, who are endowed with faith and are solely devoted to Me, are extremely dear to Me.

Summary

All kinds of devotees are dear to God, but, those who have developed or are trying to cultivate the qualities as already enunciated are dearer to God than all others.

In the previous slokas are enunciated fundamental, social, spiritual and personal virtues, which should be developed by a bhakta side by side with prayer, japa, worship, and so on. What has been said in the slokas means that a bhakta should have a noble, dignified and correct relationship with society, along with a spiritualized and enlightened outlook about the affairs of his own life; all this, in addition to his obligations to the unseen Being.

If, on the other hand, a bhakta feels that merely by living in the idealistic love of God without cultivating social and individual rectitude, he can live happily in this world and can also contribute to the community's happiness, he makes a grave mistake.

This great mistake has been committed by thousands in different countries. No doubt, there have always been a few

God-intoxicated souls, but they are exceptions. It should be understood that to walk on the path of extraordinary people is usually dangerous because those people have been leading a different type of life altogether.

Everyone will agree to this that many are being misled in the name of bhakti, you know them. How arrogant, how self-conceited, self-deluded and eternally hypnotized they are. They think that they have realized the summum bonum of their lives. They think that the subconscious explosion of personality is God. There are such devotees in every country who are miserable, unable to live in a society of diversity and incapable to face the cruel destiny.



The Three Qualities:
Trigunas

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



Yoga Publications Trust, Munger, Bihar, India

The Three Qualities: Trigunas consists of lectures delivered on Samkhya philosophy and the *Bhagavad Gita* to the trainees of the International Teachers' Training Course held in Munger from 1967–1968. It elucidates in an easy and clear way sloka by sloka the whole of chapter fourteen of the *Bhagavad Gita*.



OM

Dedicated to the eternal memory of His Holiness Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaja of Rishikesh at whose lotus feet I learnt the *Gita*.

—*Satyam*

Introduction

HARI OM

Life of the individual, society or for that matter the cosmos, without 'the three qualities' is impossible, as there is a constant interplay between the sattwa, rajo and tamo gunas.

Paramahansa Satyananda during his lectures on Samkhya philosophy and the *Bhagavad Gita*, defined the gunas, their functions, their interplay and the technique of achieving the trigunatita stage for the benefit of the trainees of the International Yoga Teachers' Training Course organized by Bihar School of Yoga, Munger. He not only discussed the gunas on the ethical or moral planes, but elucidated aspects such as the auras of the different gunas, the relation of the five tattwas with the gunas, different spheres in which the gunas operate and their time of operation. Since these lectures were original and thought-provoking, they have been compiled in the form of this book, once again, as our humble contribution to the cause of yoga.

—Publishers

The Three Qualities: Trigunas

The fourteenth chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita* mainly deals with the *trigunas* which means the three gunas or the three qualities. A perfect understanding of these, no doubt, leads to siddhi or perfection. *Siddhi* really means a stage of understanding and knowledge, where one goes beyond the laws of nature and becomes free. Lord Krishna says:

Sloka 1

Chapter 14

परं भूयः प्रवक्ष्यामि ज्ञानानां ज्ञानमुत्तमम् ।
यज्ज्ञात्वा मुनयः सर्वे परां सिद्धिमितो गताः ॥

I will again declare (to thee) that supreme knowledge, the best of all knowledge, having known which all the sages have gone to the supreme perfection after this life.

The knowledge of the trigunas is the knowledge of knowledge itself, and hence it is the highest form of knowledge ever to be conceived.

Sattwa, rajas and tamas are the three gunas which are born of prakriti and they tie the imperishable soul down to the body, but those who aspire for the knowledge of the basic principles of creation achieve a state of consciousness equal to myself and they are never again subject to the cycle of death and birth:

इदं ज्ञानमुपाश्रित्य मम साधर्म्यमागताः ।
सर्गेऽपि नोपजायन्ते प्रलये न व्यथन्ति च ॥

They who, having taken refuge in this knowledge, attain to unity with Me, are neither born at the time of creation nor are they disturbed at the time of dissolution.

Mahat Brahma is prakriti

The Lord proclaims that the Mahat Brahma is the prakriti and she is my female counterpart which I have created. When I unite myself with Mahat Brahma, the whole creation takes place. As a result, species are created, but ultimately, I am the father, the creator of all:

मम योनिर्महद्ब्रह्म तस्मिन्गर्भं दधाम्यहम् ।
सम्भवः सर्वभूतानां ततो भवति भारत ॥ 3 ॥
सर्वयोनिषु कौन्तेय मूर्तयः सम्भवन्ति याः ।
तासां ब्रह्म महद्योनिरहं बीजप्रदः पिता ॥ 4 ॥

My womb is the great Brahma; in that I place the germ; thence, O Arjuna, is the birth of all beings! (14:3)

Whatever forms are produced, O Arjuna, in any womb whatsoever, the great Brahma is their womb and I am the seed-giving father. (14:4)

The atman and the body

Lord Krishna told Arjuna, “O, Arjuna, on account of these trigunas, the imperishable atman, the proprietor of the body, is tied down (bound) to the body.”

Why is the master tied down to the body? The answer is on account of the three gunas. Although the body and its owner have two different basic qualities, still they are bound together.

Sattwa, rajas and tamas

The three words sattwa, rajas and tamas are significant. They are also referred to as sattwa guna, rajoguna and tamoguna, or as sattwic, rajasic and tamasic. Individuals possessing these qualities are known as sato-guni, rajo-guni and tamo-guni.

The gunas in different scriptures and from different aspects

Samkhya philosophy refers to these gunas in detail. The gunas have also been widely discussed in an ancient scripture known as the *Bhagavat*. In the *Bhagavat*, hundreds of slokas elucidate the nature of the three gunas, in relation to the mental and physical character of an individual and the reciprocal effect of food and social etiquettes on him. The subject of gunas cannot be confined to the ethical plane alone. The cosmos, society and the entire nature of man are operated by the interplay of the three gunas.

Yoga scriptures mention that even the astral planes of existence are not free from the interaction of the trigunas. The subtle planes or lokas are also subject to the interplay of gunas. A number of old texts opine that the creation of the world is a result of interaction of the three gunas. Only when an individual is established in his own essential nature, does he become free from the influence of the interaction of the three gunas.

The gunas and raga-dwesha

Where the three gunas are present, the qualities of *raga* and *dwesha*, likes and dislikes, are also to be found. The twin currents of raga and dwesha try to balance each other in the human personality due to the operation of the gunas. Raga and dwesha are found only when the three gunas are potent. When the gunas are absent, there is no raga and dwesha, love or hate, and so on. If one loves, it is because of the trigunas; and when one hates then the reason is the same.

The gunas and jiva

The centre of the eternal cosmic gravity and activity or entire evolutionary gravity is nothing but the trigunas or the three gunas. The evolution of the *jiva*, individual soul, is tied down to these three poles of sattwa, rajas and tamas. Jiva is clinging to the gunas. If once the string of the gunas is cut, the jiva will soar high on the spiritual plane. Therefore, Lord Krishna explained to his beloved disciple Arjuna that:

Sloka 5

Chapter 14

सत्त्वं रजस्तम इति गुणाः प्रकृतिसम्भवाः ।
निबध्नन्ति महाबाहो देहे देहिनमव्ययम् ॥

Purity, passion and inertia – these qualities, O mighty-armed Arjuna, born of Nature, bind fast in the body, the embodied, the indestructible!

The fourteenth chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita* deals with the individual and his ethical conception of the gunas, but it does not mean that this is the only field of definition of the trigunas, or it is the last word on the subject. Many other aspects of the trigunas are also to be considered. This chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita* discusses only the evolution of man on a moral basis.

The nature of sattwa guna

What can be the nature or quality of sattwa or the sattwic guna? Illumination is the quality of sattwa. It is *nirmala*, which means without any dirt or taint. Sattwa is immaculate and has nothing to do with the physical body directly. It binds a person or his body to the world through attachment for happiness and wisdom. This is the inherent nature of sattwa. When sattwa becomes powerful and predominant in an individual, it develops in him an irresistible urge for knowledge or wisdom, or an interest in *sukha* or pleasure-giving experiences. You will find that the people of sattwic character are always teachers of good experiences or *sukha*.

They are always in search of *jnana*, wisdom. This means that their minds are deeply attached to two things: i) *sukha* and ii) *jnana*. Why is it so? Why should we accept that?

Sloka 6

Chapter 14

तत्र सत्त्वं निर्मलत्वात्प्रकाशकमनामयम् ।
सुखसङ्गेन बध्नाति ज्ञानसङ्गेन चानघ ॥

Of these, *sattwa*, which from its stainlessness is luminous and healthy, binds by attachment to knowledge and to happiness, O sinless one!

Yes, by experience one knows that the form or the character of *sattwa* is luminous, clean, pure and bodiless. When the influence of *sattwa* increases in the life of an individual, there will be purity and light in the mind. More and more awareness of bodilessness is developed. Consequently, when *sattwa* predominates one does not like bad experiences and the thoughts of *avidya*, ignorance and mental inertia.

The nature of rajoguna

Lord Krishna's favourite is Arjuna, and therefore, Krishna is anxious to impart to him a detailed knowledge of the three *gunas*. He says, "O, Son of Kunti! The *rajoguna* or *rajas* has the nature of *raga*, do you know it? It is born of *trishna*, craving and attachment, which associates the soul with *karmas* or the actions." While *sattwa* has the nature to bind the soul to happiness and wisdom, *rajoguna* creates in man a natural inclination to get attached to cravings and passions. As a result, there is more attachment for *karma* or action. Therefore, assimilate this truth:

Sloka 7

Chapter 14

रजो रागात्मकं विद्धि तृष्णासङ्गसमुद्भवम् ।
तन्निबध्नाति कौन्तेय कर्मसङ्गेन देहिनम् ॥

Know thou rajas to be of the nature of passion, the source of thirst (for sensual enjoyment) and attachment; it binds fast, O Arjuna, the embodied one by attachment to action!

A sato-guni man will always seek happiness and jnana, while a rajo-guni man will seek satisfaction and enjoyment. This is the vital difference between the two men in whom the sattwa guna and the rajoguna are manifest. When an individual is full of sattwa he never cares for enjoyment. He cares and craves only for knowledge. It can be illustrated thus. The students of this course (International Yoga Teacher's Training Course), have rajoguna or tamoguna, but during these months of their practice of yoga, sattwa guna is prevailing in them. Either the sattwa in them is born out of their own effort, or it may be the result of the spiritual atmosphere of this school of yoga. The effect of sattwa or rajas can be seen by analyzing one's thoughts and actions in life.

When sattwa is predominating, rajas will also be there, but it will not prevail. All attachments or cravings are weak and practically inactive in a sato-guni. Whenever thoughts come to bind him he is not happy about it. This is the indication of the development of sattwa guna.

The nature of tamoguna

What is tamoguna? What does the *Bhagavad Gita* say about it? Tamas or the tamo guna is born of *ajnana*, which means absence of knowledge or true understanding. Ajnana hypnotizes or deludes all beings and binds the jiva to life through the virtues of procrastination, lethargy and sleep. This idea is clearly stated in this verse:

Sloka 8

Chapter 14

तमस्त्वज्ञानजं विद्धि मोहनं सर्वदेहिनाम् ।
प्रमादालस्यनिद्राभिस्तन्निबध्नाति भारत ॥

But know thou tamas to be born of ignorance, deluding all embodied beings; it binds fast, O Arjuna, by heedlessness, sleep and indolence!

Tamoguna is a negative state of jiva. When an individual's body is overpowered by the influence of tamoguna, he is like a hypnotized man, and his soul submits to procrastination, laziness and sleep.

Even as the sattwa guna has the nature of purity, illumination and bodilessness, in contradiction to it, rajoguna has the nature of raga and dwesha. In contrast to both, tamoguna has the nature of ignorance, as is clear in the following golden and sacred utterance:

Sloka 9

Chapter 14

सत्त्वं सुखे सञ्जयति रजः कर्मणि भारत ।
ज्ञानमावृत्य तु तमः प्रमादे सञ्जयत्युत ॥

Sattwa attaches to happiness, rajas to action, O Arjuna, while tamas, shrouding knowledge, attaches to heedlessness only!

Videhamukta

Therefore, we must know that sattwa guna breeds purity, rajoguna, cravings and attachment, and tamoguna breeds ignorance. Sattwa guna binds a man with a sense of happiness and jnana, rajoguna binds him with karma and attachment, and tamoguna binds him with procrastination, laziness and sleep. This is a comparative understanding of the nature of the three-fold qualities of gunas which predominate, prevail and operate in each individual self. No one living in the world is free from the interactions of these three gunas. If there be any one who has freed himself from the strings of the three gunas, he is a videhamukta. Even a jivanmukta cannot be said to be free from the influence of the three gunas. He acquires only complete control over them. As a result of that, a jivanmukta

can wonderfully work for the good and wellbeing of people. A videhamukta does not allow the gunas to play upon him. He frees himself from the three-fold *maya*, activity, of prakriti or gunas. He is known as the *trigunatita*, which means one who is beyond the scope of (actions and operations of) the three gunas. Samkhya philosophy maintains that when the three gunas become equally balanced, and have the same levels in man and in the cosmos, then there is the elimination of personality traits.

The predominance of one of the gunas

When rajoguna becomes predominant and the two other become gunas subservient in an individual or in society, there is dynamism, action, prosperity, progress and material evolution. When sattwa is predominant in the individual and society, there is seeking for knowledge, spiritual enlightenment, fine arts and a tendency to trace and discover the boundaries beyond the physical limits. When the tamoguna becomes predominant and the other two gunas are subservient, in such a case, there shall be laziness and people shall live to exploit the sentiments of their friends, parents, and so on. A society where tamoguna is prevailing will perish sooner or later. A society given to rajoguna, prospers, and a society given to sattwa guna, evolves, though very slowly. It happens so in the case of individuals also.

The sattwa guna causes and creates happiness and good experiences. The rajoguna creates and causes karma. The tamoguna neither creates happiness nor causes karma, but having been covered with *ajnana*, it causes procrastination.

When sattwa guna prevails, rajas and tamas are suppressed. When rajas prevails, sattwa and tamas are suppressed, and likewise, when tamas prevails, it suppresses sattwa and rajas both. This is the law of nature that:

रजस्तमश्चाभिभूय सत्त्वं भवति भारत ।
 रजः सत्त्वं तमश्चैव तमः सत्त्वं रजस्तथा ॥

Now sattwa prevails, O Arjuna, having overpowered rajas and tamas; now rajas, having overpowered sattwa and tamas; and now tamas, having overpowered sattwa and rajas!

The continuous interaction of all three gunas

In all the cases, the three gunas are continuously interacting, although only one of them is overriding the other two. Whenever the mind is nourished on spiritual thoughts, it cherishes the company of saints and holy souls, and is deprived of exciting and nerve-wrecking enjoyments and objects. When sattwa prevails in an individual, tamas and rajas are suppressed at that time. It is certain that the three gunas cannot predominate all throughout life, unless, the man has complete control over them. There could be some such individuals in society, but they are exceptions. In such cases, the individual is not a victim of the spontaneous interaction of the three gunas. The three gunas work as his servants, according to the dictates of his will. He becomes the master and the three gunas are at his command. This is the aim and object of a yogi. A yogi is neither a videhamukta nor a jivanmukta. A videhamukta is not a master of the three gunas; he has only freed himself from them. A jivanmukta has only complete control over the three gunas. A yogi is in reality a master of the three gunas. He gets the ability to expel and employ darkness, ignorance, passions, actions, ambitions, purity and enlightenment. They come to him at will, when he wants, and do not come when he does not.

In most cases, one of the three gunas predominates at a time and never all three together. They interact constantly and only one of them prevails at a time. In some individuals, who could be called schizophrenics, there is the spontaneous

and acute interaction of the three gunas one by one. They are violent and angry at one moment, and completely calm and quiet in the next. On one day they are full of activity and on the other, motionless. These are typical cases of the interactions of the three gunas on individuals.

In normal cases, tamas, sattwa and rajas are working together and one of them dominates the other two. Lord Krishna says that sometimes sattwa prevails, sometimes rajas and sometimes tamas. In every man these three gunas keep on moving every moment. These movements or entities are not only psychological, but are actually astral reactions on astral personalities.

Aura indicating the predominating guna

The three gunas are operating on the body, the brain and the mind of an individual, living in society, in ethical and spiritual fields. These currents can be seen by persons who are highly psychic. The aura of a person is indicative of the guna predominating in him. Therefore the aura of a man changes from time to time.

The five tattwas or elements

There is a school of dharana where meditation is conducted on the five elements: sky, air, fire, water and earth. The concentration is practised on these five elements, with their respective colours, bija mantras and symbols. They are called the five systems of concentration. The concentration is done on the five primal principles of the human body by watching the colours of the elements and trying to discover the colour of one's own personality. On account of the three gunas, the five *tattwas*, or the elements, are continuously flowing in the body. These five tattwas are classified under the three gunas. When a particular guna operates in the physical system, the element corresponding to it will evolve, and its colour will manifest. For example, when rajoguna operates the red colour manifests and its corresponding fire element begins to operate.

The gunas working in different spheres

These three gunas are not only ethical in nature. A man getting angry, for example, is not necessarily a rajo-guni. It is the entire nature of man, and not his outer actions, which is to be considered in deciding his gunas and the innermost personality. It will be the personality in which he himself believes. If one believes in truth, but apparently practises untruth, it means that he believes in sattwa, no doubt, but practises tamas: this is his real personality. This is true with all people. People have been living exactly in this manner everywhere. There is no doubt that the gunas act differently in different spheres of human personality. Sattwa guna works in the psychic sphere; rajoguna in the intellectual sphere; and tamoguna works in the actual physical and social sphere.

There is suppression and expression, prevalence and defeat of one guna over the other two gunas. It can be said that the three gunas work in shifts. They operate turn by turn. It is never one guna operating throughout in one's life. All the three are always present, but one of them predominates and the other two remain subservient.

Now, what happens when sattwa predominates? What symptoms are likely to manifest at the time when sattwa is operating? According to the 'Song Divine', the *Gita*:

Sloka 11

Chapter 14

सर्वद्वारेषु देहेऽस्मिन्नकाश उपजायते ।
ज्ञानं यदा तदा विद्याद्विवृद्धं सत्त्वमित्युत ॥

When the light and knowledge manifest through all the organs of the body, it should be known that sattwa has grown into predominance.

Similarly, what will be the state of affairs when rajas or rajoguna will prevail suppressing the other two? The *Bhagavad Gita* says that undertaking of actions, restlessness, greed and thirst for newer enjoyments, all these are born

under the condition of predominance of rajas. Listen what Lord Krishna says:

Sloka 12

Chapter 14

लोभः प्रवृत्तिरारम्भः कर्मणामशमः स्पृहा ।
रजस्येतानि जायन्ते विवृद्धे भरतर्षभ ॥

Greed, activity, the undertaking of actions, restlessness, longing – these arise when rajas is predominant, O Arjuna!

When there is absence of light, absence of activity, procrastination and confusion, know that all these are born with the growth of tamas. If there is no tamas, there will be no inertia and inactivity to subdue the conscience:

Sloka 13

Chapter 14

अप्रकाशोऽप्रवृत्तिश्च प्रमादो मोह एव च ।
तमस्येतानि जायन्ते विवृद्धे कुरुनन्दन ॥

Darkness, inertness, heedlessness and delusion – these arise when tamas is predominant, O Arjuna!

It is good to know when sattwa or rajas or tamas is predominant in our personality. As mentioned earlier, the influence of the gunas is constantly changing. The effect is never permanent. The gunas change within the personality of a man, in accordance with the change in the tattwas. Change in tattwas is always a spontaneous and natural process. Tattwas relate according to their nature and time. There is no fixed rule to control the order of operation of the gunas in the personality.

The time for operation of gunas and control over gunas

Due to tamas, night is the natural and the best hour to operate the tattwas. If one has learnt to control the gunas of his nature, he can make any one of them operate, although

the time may be due for one particular guna. A yogi can alter the scheme of nature, provided he has a complete knowledge and control of the scheme of the gunas and tattwas. In the absence of the knowledge, a human being will be influenced by the natural scheme of rotation and movement of the tattwas and gunas. Therefore, it is essential for the spiritual aspirant to know which of the three gunas is predominating at a particular time. Or, what can happen if sattwa, or rajas or tamas is dominating?

When sattwa is prevailing the others remain subservient, either for a short while or for a long period. Then, the senses and the mind express and manifest in the quality of viveka or the light. It is not a light in an ordinary sense. *Viveka* means discrimination, or the power to distinguish between the truth and the untruth, the real and the unreal. When sattwa becomes predominant in a personality, it introduces viveka and displays the right sense and things are understood in their real nature.

When an act of viveka is displayed through mind and senses, it is sure that sattwa is predominating and becoming more and more powerful in the personality. When it so happens, certain efforts are to be made in order to make this state of mind permanent.

When greed is intense in one's nature, which is a part of the personality, one begins to love activity along with restlessness of the mind, which is incapable of making decisions. An unevolved mind often makes wrong decisions.

Spriha

When one is not satisfied with the pleasures that are already available to him, it is known as *spruha*. The symptoms of spruha manifest in the personality, when rajas is very strong. If you want to develop a dynamic yet rajasic personality, make these factors abiding in your life. To develop spirituality, suppress these symptoms of rajas by practical and spiritual methods.

When darkness is around and it is difficult to decide the course of action, or when you are unable to think for

yourself, this state of mind may be known as absence of viveka or the light. Inactivity, procrastination and confusion creep into the personality only when it is prevailed upon by tamoguna. If you want this state of consciousness to be continued, find out a technique by which tamoguna can be intensified. If you want to eliminate it, practise rajoguna in different ways.

The presence and influence of one of the three gunas make a man good or bad. It is natural. There is no choice or effort to be made. Man is a natural slave of the gunas. If a saint has good thoughts, it is only because of the influence of sattwa upon him. Therefore, sattwa is the cause of merit or glory.

Mastery over the gunas

So long as a man is a natural medium of the trigunas, there is neither gain nor loss of his own. He is as good as an animal, because his behaviour is more or less on the instinctive plane, but the moment he gets a conscious control over the three gunas by practice of sadhanas (mental, physical, psychic and higher), then, for some time, he has to develop tamoguna first by his own conscious will. One who develops tamoguna in his personality and is able to operate it at will, can certainly expel it also at will.

A spiritual aspirant also has to make the rajoguna abide by him at his own will. A person who is capable of making rajoguna abide in his personality as long as he wants, will also have the power to expel it whenever he likes.

Likewise, the spiritual aspirant has to develop sattwa guna in him. He should make it abiding in his personality. If tamoguna tries to suppress it, he may throw tamoguna away. Never allow the tattwas to change your behaviour. Mind should not be subjected to conditions and circumstances. When one is established in sattwa guna, he is not only the master of sattwa guna alone, but is the master of the trigunas.

The transcendence of the trigunas

When this task has been accomplished by the spiritual aspirant, the next one will be the transcendence of the trigunas and not its mastery. It is a very high sadhana. The preponderance of sattwa brings in discrimination and true knowledge. The preponderance of rajoguna manifests in mental and physical dynamism, and with the preponderance of tamas comes physical and mental inertia.

The predominating guna determines next incarnations

When sattwa is predominant in the human system, man attains a state of dissolution of consciousness. As a result, he achieves a pure and high world of knowledge while living, and, at the time of physical death, if he is full of sattwa, he is reborn among those who have the highest wisdom. If death takes place when the person is full of rajoguna, he is born in the family of those who are attached to karmas. Likewise, when man leaves his body during the predominating state of tamas, he is incarnated as a stupid and a foolish man. This is clearly stated in the following lines:

Slokas 14–15

Chapter 14

यदा सत्त्वे प्रवृद्धे तु प्रलयं याति देहभृत् ।
तदोत्तमविदां लोकानमलान्प्रतिपद्यत ॥ 14 ॥
रजसि प्रलयं गत्वा कर्मसङ्गिषु जायते ।
तथा प्रलीनस्तमसि मूढयोनिषु जायते ॥ 15 ॥

If the embodied one meets with death when sattwa has become predominant, then he attains to the spotless worlds of the knowers of the Highest. (14)

Meeting death in rajas, he is born among those who are attached to action; and dying in tamas, he is born in the womb of the senseless. (15)

Trigunas and spiritual life

What is the place of sattwa, rajas and tamas in the psychic and spiritual life of the individual? The *Gita* is concerned with the problem of human life. It is a book on Brahma vidya. The *Gita* is a yoga shastra, a scripture dealing with the subject of yoga. Lord Krishna explains in it the trigunas in relation to spiritual and social life.

The dissolution of awareness takes place in meditation. At a time when sattwa is predominating and sushumna is also flowing, astral experiences of meditation are of a true nature. They may also be called intuition.

At the time of dissolution of consciousness and when sushumna is flowing in the body, one is sure to experience those planes of consciousness, which are amala. *Amala* means pure. It means that one achieves the high, the supreme and the noble state of knowledge during this period.

If sushumna is not flowing and surya nadi is flowing, at the time of dissolution of consciousness in meditation, one attains a plane of consciousness where he is associated with karmas. If the dissolution of consciousness takes place in meditation while the chandra nadi is flowing, then a state of mind will dawn where consciousness will enter into a realm of inactivity and stupidity.

The trigunas and nadis in meditation

The development of sattwa, rajas and tamas should be done through the control of the nadis. Sushumna is the sattwic nadi, surya nadi is the rajasic nadi, and the chandra nadi is the tamasic nadi. When both the nadis, surya and chandra, are flowing together, it is sushumna that flows. Therefore, to attain better meditation, it is necessary that ida, pingala and sushumna should flow together. To turn the laya state into real samadhi, development of sattwa is a necessity. The importance, significance and the functions of the three gunas have been discussed so far. Now, what would be the impact of these on life? What results would they bring and in what form? It is said that the fruit or the outcome of

good actions is sattwic and pure; the fruit of rajas is pain; and the fruit of tamas is ignorance. The *Gita* supports this statement:

Sloka 16

Chapter 14

कर्मणः सुकृतस्याहुः सात्त्विकं निर्मलं फलम् ।
रजसस्तु फलं दुःखमज्ञानं तमसः फलम् ॥

The fruit of good action, they say, is sattwic and pure; the fruit of rajas is pain, and ignorance is the fruit of tamas.

We are informed further that from sattwa is born jnana; from rajas only greed, and from tamas are born procrastination, confusion and ajnana. Study the following sloka:

Sloka 17

Chapter 14

सत्त्वात्सञ्जायते ज्ञानं रजसो लोभ एव च ।
प्रमादमोहौ तमसो भवतोऽज्ञानमेव च ॥

From sattwa arises knowledge, and greed from rajas; heedlessness and delusion arise from tamas, and ignorance also.

The *Gita* also maintains that men established in sattwa rise; men established in rajas stay in the middle; and men established in tamas have a tendency for heinous crimes and therefore go down.

This truth can be interpreted and illustrated in the social, individual and spiritual context. What will be the condition of the consciousness when people belonging to different gunas meditate? Does the consciousness go high, stay at one place or go down? The nature of a man, or society, or the meditation and the karmas of a man are influenced and decided by the trigunas. Therefore:

ऊर्ध्वं गच्छन्ति सत्त्वस्था मध्ये तिष्ठन्ति राजसाः ।
जघन्यगुणवृत्तिस्था अधो गच्छन्ति तामसाः ॥

Those who are seated in sattwa proceed upwards; the rajasic dwell in the middle; and the tamasic, abiding in the function of the lowest guna, go downwards.

Lord Krishna says:

नान्यं गुणेभ्यः कर्तारं यदा द्रष्टानुपश्यति ।
गुणेभ्यश्च परं वेत्ति मद्भावं सोऽधिगच्छति ॥

When the seer does not see the doer other than the trigunas, and knows the Transcendental Being beyond the reach of the trigunas, he attains identity with Me.

Trigunatita

Trigunatita is a state of consciousness where one is able to transcend the effects of the trigunas. It is a state of mind, where an individual can make himself free from the habit of identification with the three gunas and their invariable concomitance.

It is true that the body is subject to the laws and operations of the three gunas. It is true that the mind is also subjected to them. The body, prana and mind cannot work unless their relation and conjunction with the three gunas are intact. Raga or dwesha, action or inaction, dynamism or a state of absolute equipoise, all these are offspring of the three gunas. It is true that as long as one is connected with the effects of these, he will not be able to go beyond the boundary walls which have imprisoned his soul.

Then, there is a way to liberation. It is a psychological or rather a spiritual method. Give up all your actions and respective duties, and stop thinking, but this method, by experience, is found to be incorrect.

The attitude of drashta

The *Gita* evolves a new technique or tune on which Lord Krishna harps from the beginning till the end. He says, there is a faculty, a mood of awareness in all, called *drashta*, or the seer, and not the doer, or the enjoyer, or the sufferer. A drashta is one who is not subjected to destiny. He is one who is always aware of what is taking place. This faculty of awareness is unmanifest in an ignorant man, but manifest in a man of wisdom.

When a man says, “I am suffering,” or “I am enjoying,” it is true, but at the same time, he is aware of the fact that ‘he is enjoying’. This awareness is a special privilege to man and is not found among animals. The faculty to witness consciousness in man is called drashta or the seer. This faculty has to be evolved by separating the witnessing consciousness from the personality. It is a new technique that Lord Krishna has evolved. Details of this technique may be found in the scriptures of Vedanta.

Awareness of the seen and the seer in oneself

By a rational method one can divide one’s personality into two: i) the sufferer or the enjoyer, and ii) the one who is observing the suffering or enjoyment. An objection may be raised to this division that it may split the personality into two. The answer is that these two are already there. One has only to be aware of them.

An illustration will explain this. Suppose, your purse containing money is lost and you feel sorry for it. Or, suppose you have been beaten and you are hurt. Now, you do not feel the pain only, but there is also the feeling of awareness of pain, which is more terrible. The consciousness that I have lost or I am hurt is more acute. This is not so with animals. When you beat them, they do have physical pain, but since their higher awareness, the *drashta atma*, is not evolved, they suffer only physically, without being aware of the pain itself. Man has developed a heightened awareness in him in the course of many centuries. Men of

East and West both are now more developed in this feeling of drashta and this makes them suffer more in varying degrees.

The non-identification with the sufferer

When this drashta, the seeing consciousness, identifies itself with the suffering man, then the suffering is felt more. However, when it does not identify itself with the sufferer, but just keeps itself aware of the suffering that is taking place in him, he becomes free from the suffering. This is a vedantic method of sadhana. It is a practice, which Vedantins and sannyasins are supposed to practise. Instead of the feeling that 'I am suffering or watching', he says to himself, "I am aware of the fact that I am suffering", or "my body or my mind is suffering only because I am aware of this fact, otherwise, I do not suffer at all."

The seeing-consciousness in man should be trained to think that it is the three gunas that are operating upon his life. When one sees the gunas operating on the body throughout life, he is able to separate the part of sufferings from the inner personality.

Suffering is a kind of experience which an individual records in his mind. If one wants that he should not suffer, he has to detach his mind and divide it into two: the seeing mind and the suffering mind. Practise it, when there is a little pain in any part of the body. Concentrate on that pain, and you will be surprised to realize that the pain has stopped as if the effect of anaesthesia has spread in that area. It is not hypnotism but a truth, because pain is only a form of mental experience. Suffering is nothing but a mental condition. The same is the case with enjoyment. It has no direct correspondence or relation with the physical conditions. Even without a physical body one can enjoy or suffer as happens many a time in dreams. It is only a mental condition which is called 'suffering' or 'enjoyment'.

The cause of suffering

The cause of suffering is mind. When I see my suffering, the cause of suffering, the attitude of my mind and the person in me who says, “I am suffering,” then, I find, that suffering is nothing but an interplay of the three gunas over the mind.

When the rajoguna is predominant the sufferings are intense. When the sattwa guna prevails, then though the sufferings are there, they are analyzed and understood properly, and hence their effects are neutralized by application of viveka and the right knowledge. When tamoguna is functioning the suffering is there, but one is unaware of it.

In animals, therefore, the tamoguna is more intense, as a result of which they suffer, yet are unaware of it. In man, the rajoguna is predominant, as a result of which, when he suffers, he is more aware of the suffering. This is why man suffers more than animals, and his pain seems greater. Man’s psychological complexes are really complex, and perhaps man is the only creature of all beings that suffers from psychological complexes.

When you suppress rajoguna and develop sattwa guna, sufferings still remain, but their effect on the mind is less, and as such, the degree of suffering differs.

The suffering causes tremendous pain on account of mental contention, and its identification with the mind. With the advent of sattwa guna, pain, enjoyment and the troubles remain the same, but there is a difference in the receiving apparatus, the mind. When the mind receives the experiences of pain, it receives the whole thing, but when the mind is divided into two, the suffering mind and the witnessing mind, the suffering is reduced.

How to become a trigunatita

Now, the problem is: how to transcend the effects of the three gunas and thereby become a trigunatita? Is it ever possible for any person to discard the awareness and effect of the three gunas?

Then, is it possible for a living man to run away completely from the Earth? Is it desirable that every man should walk in the air? No! Every man shall walk on the Earth. So long as I am alive, I shall have to live with the three gunas. Talking, sleeping, eating, different actions, thoughts, movements, effects, relationships, and so on, will always be guided by the three gunas and by destiny, but so far as suffering and enjoyment and their effects are concerned, they will depend on the three gunas.

The seer of one's own self

Even a great saint, a mahatma, a liberated man, or a prophet, lives on Earth like any other common man. He thinks, and eats like others, but a difference, and perhaps a great difference, between him and an ordinary man is that the ordinary man has not developed that consciousness, which is known as drashta, while this great man has developed the drashta or the spectator consciousness in him by which he sees his life like a picture, or like a cinema, or like a football match. He finds himself suffering, crying, screaming or committing suicide due to frustration on the television set of his own mind. The television set of his mind, which he himself has evolved, displays everything to him. This is why a sage is called the seer.

A sage does not see only the past, present and future, but since he is a seer, he sees the interaction and interplay of the three gunas also over his body, mind and the senses. It is a wonderful process if one is able to think and develop this particular phase of consciousness within. From there he can see his own self, without the help of LSD, or any drug. Through viveka or a rational method, one should learn to think, "I am." Vedanta prescribes this method. When one thinks about the body, mind and the senses, he should immediately think about his witnessing consciousness. One should immediately become aware of the awareness that 'I am speaking', or 'I was talking'. This awareness is to be developed gradually. One must learn to see oneself

speaking. When this awareness is constant, unfluctuating and spontaneous, it is easy to transcend the effects of the three gunas. This is the state of a trigunatita as discussed in the *Gita*.

Awareness of witnessing consciousness

The word trigunatita should not be misunderstood as a mad man, who does not know the difference between the sweet pudding and cow dung. A trigunatita is not an insane man who knows no difference between the two sexes. By trigunatita, the *Gita* does not mean a man who does not know the subjective and objective difference, or one who is unaware of objective realities. A trigunatita is he who accepts pain as pain, death as death and life as life. He regards honour as honour and disrespect as disrespect, but, his response or the way of reception is different. While an ordinary man of the world receives these things and identifies himself completely with them, a sage called trigunatita, receives them with the awareness of witnessing consciousness. This is the entire secret of a trigunatita and the secret of vedantic philosophy.

Sahaj sadhana

A special sadhana should be adopted for the development of this awareness, known as sahaj sadhana. *Sahaj* means spontaneous, and *sadhana* means the practice. In this spontaneous practice, one does not need to close the eyes, ears, nose or heartbeats, nor is he required to practise asanas, meditation, study or any rituals. He only observes what he is doing from moment to moment. In between your programs during the daytime be aware for five minutes of what you are doing. This is all one has to do. Neither prayer nor padmasana is necessary for it. To be a priest or a God-believer is also non-essential. Be quiet and say to yourself, "What am I doing?" Try to separate the mind from the self. By this practice for about a month or more, one is able to see his self separate. It is a separation in the consciousness and not in the physical system. For example, if I say to my mind,

“I, Swami Satyananda, am talking and delivering a lecture” no one else would see it, because it is an awareness, or a kind of feeling only. This sadhana is an important one.

Attaining immortality

Then again the *Gita* proclaims:

Sloka 20

Chapter 14

गुणानेतानतीत्य त्रीन्देही देहसमुद्भवान् ।
जन्ममृत्युजरादुःखैर्विमुक्तोऽमृतमश्नुते ॥

The embodied one, having crossed beyond these three gunas out of which the body is evolved, is freed from birth, death, decay and pain, and attains to immortality.

The *Gita* believes that after having transcended the three gunas which are born of the body, the owner of the body becomes free from birth, death, old age and sorrow, and experiences immortality. What do we mean by immortality? Is it a state to be aspired for?

When the individual soul is able to transcend the range of the three gunas in the form of conscious samadhi or, in other words, when the individual soul is able to go beyond the scope of these three gunas, or is able to reach beyond samprajnata or sabija samadhi, it is there that all the dimensions of consciousness are achieved in the form of experience, and it is known as *amrita* or immortality. In the terminology of yoga and the *Gita*, the word immortality or amrita should not mean the physical state of deathlessness. This word is a combination of two words, a and mrit. *A* means ‘no’, and *mrit* means ‘death’. Therefore, amrit means ‘no death’. It is true that all experiences gained by a spiritual aspirant up to samprajnata samadhi are not imperishable, and are subject to change, destruction and death, but the experience of higher cognition of perceptions, that takes place in nirbija samadhi, or in the highest form of consciousness, does not change. It is not interrupted

by the state of *shoonya* or void, as happens in samprajnata samadhi.

During vitarka, vichara, ananda and asmita, the four-fold process, samprajnata samadhi is interrupted by the state of shoonya, but in asamprajnata or nirbija samadhi, the experiences taking place in the consciousness remain the same. They do not diminish, disappear, reappear, fluctuate or change at all. Therefore, that stable, permanent, undying and unchanging state of consciousness in nirbija samadhi is known as amrita or immortality. The body may die because it is not immortal, but the experience of the consciousness is immortal. This immortality of experience or the immortality of the state of higher consciousness is never subjected to three gunas, and therefore, the *Gita* says, *gunan etan ateetya*, which means, 'having transcended the gunas', or 'having gone over or beyond these gunas', one attains immortality or amrita.

The samprajnata samadhi is subjected to three gunas, and therefore, it is experienced in four stages: vitarka, vichara, ananda and asmita (See Commentary on *Yoga Sutras*). Lord Krishna instructs Arjuna on the three gunas, and also gives a glimpse of an altogether new state of samadhi, which could be free from the tinges of the three gunas.

The spiritual state beyond the three gunas

In Chapter 2 of the *Gita*, Arjuna asks Krishna, "What is the definition of *sthitaprajna* and *samadhistha*; how does a *sthitaprajna* speak and move?" In the same manner, Arjuna is asking a question here about one who is supposed to have gone beyond the effects of the three gunas in the state of spiritual existence:

Sloka 21

Chapter 14

कैर्लिङ्गैस्त्रीन्गुणानेतानतीतो भवति प्रभो ।
किमाचारः कथं चैतांस्त्रीन्गुणानतिवर्तते ॥

What are the characteristics of one who has transcended these three gunas? What are his movements and conduct, and how does he go beyond these three gunas?

The three questions asked are: i) What are the remarkable attributes of one who has gone beyond the effects of gunas? ii) What are his movements – physical, social or otherwise? iii) How does he make himself immune from the effects of the three gunas, when the rest of the world is not? These questions have a reply:

Sloka 22

Chapter 14

प्रकाशं च प्रवृत्तिं च मोहमेव च पाण्डव ।
न द्वेष्टि सम्प्रवृत्तानि न निवृत्तानि काङ्क्षति ॥

Light, activity and delusion, when they are present, O Arjuna, he hates not, nor does he long for them when they are absent!

The attitude of a trigunatita

A trigunatita who has gone beyond the effect of three gunas, does not hate the light of sattwa, the activities born of rajas, and the confusion born of tamas. He is neither subjected to the three gunas, nor wishes to renounce them.

In short, the person who has gone beyond the effects of the three gunas does not feel at a loss when his life is subjected to these three gunas, nor is he ever anxious to become free from the interactions of them. He becomes a real trigunatita. He is not one who dislikes the three gunas or wants to get rid of the three gunas. For him, the introduction or the absence of three gunas in life, are almost the same. He observes all the affairs of his life like a seer, an impartial drashta. There is a tendency that spiritual aspirants are afraid of the three gunas. When they find that the three gunas are affecting and operating in their life they are greatly disturbed.

In the same manner, when an ordinary man is subjected to these three gunas, he also identifies himself with the effects of the three gunas. He feels pain in sorrow and happiness in pleasure. In the case of an advanced spiritual aspirant it is found throughout, that when he comes to the point of sorrow, he wants to renounce instead of facing it. Likewise, when he comes to the point of pleasure, he wants to escape. It is a disqualification for an ordinary aspirant and an advanced sadhaka both. A sadhaka should be beyond the effects of sorrows and pleasures. He should make himself immune to such an extent that both sorrows and pleasure do not disturb him at all. When the state of happiness comes he is alert, so that happiness does not hypnotize or delude him.

These are the symptoms of one who has gone beyond the three gunas. When a spiritual aspirant transcends the three gunas, his attitude of mind is unchangeable. He likes, suffers, undergoes, but never wants to be away from them. He does not hate them. His attitude is difficult to understand. He does not enjoy, nor does he renounce happiness. He takes them as they are because they come to him. It is something like being open to nature and the season.

A trigunatita becomes extraordinarily wise and alert. He becomes conversant with creation due to his wonderful rational approach, which is neither delusion nor conjuring of maya. His attitude is remarkable:

Sloka 23

Chapter 14

उदासीनवदासीनो गुणैर्यो न विचाल्यते ।

गुणा वर्तन्त इत्येव योऽवतिष्ठति नेङ्गते ॥

He who, seated like one unconcerned, is not moved by the qualities, and who, knowing that the qualities are active, is self-centred and moves not.

A trigunatita is he who, while remaining indifferent, is not moved by the gunas and, knowing thus that the gunas

operate, remains firmly established and never shakes. A gunatita, without being affected by the light of sattwa, or the activities born of rajas, or the confusion caused by tamas, never feels sorry, nor ever desires freedom from them. He remains a silent witness, unattached and indifferent, as if he has gone beyond the effects. He is mentally unshaken and undisturbed. When sattwa produces pleasure in dhyana, he is not attached to it. When rajoguna produces greed and activity, he is not allured by those. When tamas produces complete lethargy, sleep and a state of inertia, he does not hate.

To him, it appears that all these different states of gunas are the passing phases of the apparent personality. He is like a spectator in a cinema hall. For the time being, he feels identified with all that is taking place on the screen, but the next moment, he understands that it is a mere passing scene in front of him, and realizes the futility and meaninglessness of the whole thing. The trigunatita gets a clear-cut understanding of the real truth, "The three gunas are operating through my body, life and mind. I am not concerned with them. The natural urges of life, to which I am not really a subject, are being attended and governed by the laws of the three gunas."

Sattwa, by nature is full of illumination and when it operates over the body and the mind, it results in peace, knowledge and illumination. To transcend the effects of the three gunas, one should proceed with an analysis of them. One should not be moved or impressed even by the illumination of sattwa guna, till the state of jivanmukti is attained.

Samskaras are guided and propelled by the force of the three gunas. In order to transcend the gunas, it is meaningless to wait until jivanmukti or videhamukti is achieved. With all his imperfections even an ordinary man can remain firmly rooted in the mental condition of a trigunatita. The state of trigunatita is a state of an avadhoota. Just as medicine is for one who is ill, hospital is

for one who is suffering, a school is for one who is illiterate or wants knowledge and education, in the same manner, the state of trigunatita is for that man who is in a quagmire or an abyss, or is amidst disturbing elements of life. Therefore, the state of trigunatita, as pronounced in the *Gita*, is the need of an ordinary man and not of a highly evolved spiritual soul.

Trigunatita stage: a higher form of viveka

A mukta or a jivanmukta is a very high state of life. The trigunatita state is only a higher form of viveka. It is a higher, impartial and rational approach to life. Just by a stroke of convictions, or viveka, or thinking, its practice becomes easy.

Buddhi yoga

The mind of an ordinary man is full of vasanas, impurities, hidden desires and cravings. What should he do? Should he suffer because he is not a jivanmukta? Should he suppress his desires and suffer? Where can he get the right, proper, correct and practical guidance?

Suppose, I am a wretched man and I cannot be beyond it. I want to, but I cannot. I am taught to become jivanmukta, but I don't like this idea; I cannot understand it. If I take up a sadhana which will be complete in fifteen years, in that case I will have to suffer for fifteen years. It is an impossible project for me. Then, one may say, "All right! If you cannot do sadhana, then you suffer."

So, there should be an absolutely rational and practical approach to the problem of life. This approach in the *Gita* is known as buddhi yoga. The entire phenomena of the problems of life should be dealt with a soft psychic approach. One should not root out greed, anger and passions first. No temptation of pleasure or illumination in jnana should be advanced to the aspirant. Let not lethargy, procrastination and sleep of tamoguna worry him. These will come and go away.

An aspirant should mind his own business, without interfering with the movements of gunas. Let the gunas operate in your body in an intuitional relationship with the *pancha tattwas*, the five elements.

Gunas in relation to different stages of samadhi

The scholars of swara yoga know when it is the time for tattwas to change. The gunas are bound to prevail upon your body and mind in relation with the tattwas. The three gunas are dormant only in samadhi, *nidra*, sleep, or yoga nidra, but, the moment one wakes up, his every word, thought and action is decided and directed by one of the gunas. Without guna there can be no life. Even the problem of samadhi is to be understood and discussed under the shade of these three gunas. The samprajnata and asamprajnata samadhis are discussed and practised under the influence of the gunas, namely, vitarka, vichara, ananda and asmita. These are all subjected to the operation of the three gunas. Vishesha, avishesha, linga and alinga are the varieties of gunas (See Commentary on *Yoga Sutras*).

Gunas transmigrate with the soul

Is it desirable to spend energy, mental or otherwise in fighting with the influences of the gunas? Moralists have been fighting with them from the cradle to the pyre and may continue their fight for many births without a gain. They fight with their personality which is composed of the gunas. The more they fight, the more the gunas become keen. The great seers, mahatmas and yogis say, "One who tries to cut down the gunas, cuts nothing but his own self." The gunas, like the imperishable soul, do not die with the death of the body. They also transmigrate with the soul wherever it goes. They don't leave one even in the mother's womb or after attainment of jivanmukta. They are like the clouds passing over the sky of the body, touching only the surface of a jivanmukta's life. The life of the great Swami Vivekananda was also full of rajas, but he employed it in a constructive

scheme. The life of the great 'Trailing Swami', who used to remain anywhere with closed eyes, knowing nothing, and always immersed in tamas, he also employed his tamoguna in a constructive and creative way.

Sattwa, rajas and tamas are not to be eliminated from the program of your mind and life. All the raja yogic, bhakti yogic or jnana yogic sadhanas should continue as usual with a rational approach to the simple problems of life. Live in the body, yet feel as if you are bodiless. Live in the mind, but don't be affected by the mind. Live in the world of raga and dwesha, but don't be affected by the world of raga and dwesha. Allow sattwa and other gunas to pass spontaneously, freely and unobstructed, and observe their entire function. This is the way to be free from the effects of the three gunas.

The nature of a trigunatita

The *Gita* further says that a trigunatita is even-minded in pain and pleasure. He has an equal vision in case of a piece of mud or stone and gold. For him a pleasant and an unpleasant experience have equal value, and he is always patient and rooted in his own self. For him criticism and praise carry the same meaning. He is always even-minded in respect of honour and dishonour, and in case of friends and foes. He has renounced the sense of doership in all undertakings because he has transcended the gunas. Listen:

Slokas 24-25

Chapter 14

समदुःखसुखः स्वस्थः समलोष्टाश्मकाञ्चनः ।
तुल्यप्रियाप्रियो धीरस्तुल्यनिन्दात्मसंस्तुतिः ॥ 24 ॥
मानापमानयोस्तुल्यस्तुल्यो मित्रारिपक्षयोः ।
सर्वारम्भपरित्यागी गुणातीतः स उच्यते ॥ 25 ॥

Alike in pleasure and pain, who dwells in the self, to whom a clod of earth, stone and gold are alike, to whom

the dear and the unfriendly are alike, firm, the same in censure and praise. (24)

The same in honour and dishonour, the same to friend and foe, abandoning all undertakings – he is said to have crossed the qualities. (25)

It is considered by most people that a *trigunatita* is like an *avadhoota*, which means one who is careless about society, life and everything. As a result, the selfish leaders styling themselves as benefactors of society and the nation call these indifferent people irresponsible members of society, but one should remember that the *Gita* was written in a society which was prosperous and people were living in abundance. That society had attained the highest state of prosperity and materialistic progress. It is true that when a society has made tremendous materialistic advancements, it needs a change, a break-up. The *Gita* brings the mind to a state of mental affairs, which has become necessary, in the case of those persons who are rolling in prosperity, comfort, luxury and abundance.

Dynamic indifference

It is the law of nature that the more one is sensitive, the more one feels pain and sorrow. The more there is development of intelligence in society, the more is the depth and intensity of impressions on the individual life. Therefore, an ordinary villager has always less degree of feelings than an intelligent man, who is sensitive. Anything spoken to the intelligent goes deep into him and he reacts either positively or negatively. The same behaviour with a simple, less intelligent and less sensitive man will bring only a mild reaction. The spiritual and psychological pains are found to be more acute among the intelligent class.

The currents of likes and dislikes, actions and reactions, honour and dishonour, favourable and adverse situations, opinions of friends and foes are more express and acute in the case of a sensitive man. Therefore, it becomes necessary

for the modern man to develop the quality of dynamic indifference. By this psychic quality of dynamic indifference, the sensitive personality shall remain above the effects of the subjective and objective shocks of life. The spiritual aspirant rises high in spiritual life and goes beyond the planes of normal consciousness.

Trigunatita in the state of laya

The quality of trigunatita is essential in the laya period, where this attitude is responsible for the movement of consciousness in between the first, second, third and fourth stages of samprajnata samadhi.

The laya stage is a state of void in dhyana, or in samadhi. In this stage, the individual awareness stops to function. What is that consciousness which is then going to immerse on the next plane? What factor remains responsible for the silent motion of the consciousness? It is the attitude of trigunatita.

Not only for samadhi but also for a modern man of society, trigunatita is a necessary qualification. It may be useless for those who want to walk in sleep, or want to go deep into the stage of laya, or who want to transcend the unconscious state of asamprajnata samadhi.

Vairagya

The practice of trigunatita brings vairagya. It is impossible to translate the Sanskrit word vairagya into English. A trigunatita is a vairagi. He is one who is preparing himself for higher spiritual flights, so that when the consciousness soars high on the unconscious planes, it is not pulled down or back to the lower regions of consciousness. The higher consciousness does not recede back into lower consciousness. In the *Gita*, Lord Krishna says, "I agree that the mind soars high and drops down again. The consciousness goes up and comes down again and again, but by *abhyasa* and *vairagya*, by regular practice and detachment in life, one is able to have a complete inescapable grip over the mind."

The qualities of a trigunatita and a vairagi are the same. A true *bhakta*, devotee, also develops all these qualities in him that are necessary for the expression of vairagya.

According to the *Gita*, “a bhakta is he who does not hate and who is a friend of all.” A true bhakta can practise vairagya which is necessary for a successful take-off to higher planes of consciousness. A true trigunatita is the most successful aspirant for the spiritual take-off. A trigunatita is not to be considered as one who has gone beyond the range of sabija samadhi. A trigunatita is he who is above the influences of the three gunas. He is one who is rendering himself for a higher state of consciousness.

The gunas in Samkhya philosophy

Samkhya philosophy gives a detailed account of the gunas. The constitution of man and the entire structure of the universe should be considered and understood in the light of the three gunas. Man, society and the universe are directly concerned with the three gunas. An enlightening angle of study of the nature of the three gunas is found in Samkhya philosophy.

The five tattwas – their natures and centres

There are five primordial elements of nature, known as pancha tattwas: earth, water, fire, air and sky. They have their own colour, form, sound, mantra and mystic centres. For example, the form of akasha is sound, its colour is blue, its corresponding sense is the ear, the bija mantra is *yam* and the mystic centre is in the anahata chakra.

The gunas as creative forces

Prakriti or nature manifests itself in sattwa, rajas and tamas, which are creative forces. While prakriti is the feminine principle, purusha is the consciousness and basic principle of the creation.

When the gunas act in an objective way, there is the creation of the universe: man, planets, stars, and so on, but

when they manifest themselves in a subjective way, there is spiritual progress of man and the world.

The importance of understanding the gunas

In the end, Lord Krishna again assures Arjuna that only that person can ever hope to be able to be united with the eternal spirit and the divine source of the universe, through development of perfect understanding of the deep significance of the three gunas, who worships the Lord and performs bhakti and the yoga associated with it, both in pureness of heart and mind.

Sloka 26

Chapter 14

मां च योऽव्यभिचारेण भक्तियोगेन सेवते ।
स गुणान्समतीत्यैतान्ब्रह्मभूयाय कल्पते ॥

And he who serves Me with unswerving devotion, he, crossing beyond the qualities, is fit for becoming Brahman.

Lord Krishna concludes His sermon to Arjuna on *gunatrayavibhagayoga*, the yoga of the division of the three gunas, Chapter 14 of the *Gita* with the following verse:

Sloka 27

Chapter 14

ब्रह्मणो हि प्रतिष्ठाहममृतस्याव्ययस्य च ।
शाश्वतस्य च धर्मस्य सुखस्यैकान्तिकस्य च ॥

I only am the true shield of the Lord, the Creator, and of the Supreme, Immortal and Indestructible Soul, as also of the nectar, ambrosia, and of the permanent faith and of the indivisible happiness in unity.



Samadhi

A study on Rishi Patanjali's concept of samadhi

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Published in March 1965, *Samadhi* is a scholarly interpretation of Sage Patanjali's concept of samadhi. Referring to the *Yoga Sutras*, Sri Upendra Baxi, former Vice-Chancellor, University of Delhi, presents his understanding while quoting extensively other sources and scholars.

Upendra Baxi

Upendra Baxi, Emeritus Professor, University of Warwick and Delhi, has been Vice-Chancellor at the University of Delhi and South Gujarat University. Baxi, a professor of law, has taught jurisprudence in Delhi, Australia, United Kingdom, USA and Canada. His most notable publications include *The Future of Human Rights* and *Human Rights in a Post Human World*. He was awarded the Padma Shri in 2011.

His association with Sri Swamiji and the Bihar School of Yoga dates back to his formative years, when he started his career in Bombay.

Samadhi

In the total structure of yogic efforts, samadhi is usually considered the last element. With the attainment of samadhi, the path for liberation shows itself and the eternal freedom from the manifestation of prakriti is almost secured. Of the ashtanga yoga enunciated by Patanjali, samadhi is the last anga and though refinements in this state of consciousness are variously described, there is no stage beyond samadhi.

Samadhi, therefore, always offers a challenge to the aspirant who is warned by Patanjali in his *Yoga Sutras* (3:6):

That light of higher consciousness should be applied to different, finer states of consciousness. It must be applied step by step.

The attainment of samadhi, for Patanjali, is the culminating point of *chitta vritti nirodha*, which yoga aims at, and is to be reached by disciplined efforts of consciousness (1:2):

To block the patterns of consciousness is yoga.

Samadhi appears to be more an experiential concept, not subject to any uniform description or structural analysis. A precise understanding of the concept of samadhi has, therefore, always eluded the aspirant as well as the onlooker. Nonetheless, it is of supreme importance to understand the features of the states of consciousness which signify samadhi, and one finds that voluminous literature on the subject, both

lay and technical, offers nothing but unsystematic, random insights into the constituent elements.

Problems of analysis

i) *Semantic*: The usual lack of the standard terminology which could express the meaning of a term adequately is felt in rendering the concept of *samadhi* intelligible. The term means ‘union, totality, absorption, in conjunction’.

It has been frequently translated as ‘meditation’. Ganganath Jha, perhaps, first gave to us this equivalent. But the word meditation is used often for *dhyana* as well as for the total process of *samyama* which includes *dharana*, *dhyana* and *samadhi*. Again *samadhi* is a ‘state’ of consciousness and not a specific process or technique of meditation.

Samadhi has also been taken to mean ‘identification’ by Alain Danielou and ‘absorption’ by Isherwood and Swami Prabhavananda. This translation is quite loyal to the description of *samadhi* given in several of Patanjali’s sutras, where *samadhi* connotes a univalent merger with *Purusha*, dualities and plurality, having ceased to exist.

Aurobindo speaks of *samadhi* as a ‘yogic trance’ and himself explains that the word ‘trance’ may imply an ‘inevitable break’ where once again the subtle mind may be eclipsed, whereas actually it does not happen in highest *samadhi*.

Swami Sivananda calls it variously ‘a superconscious state’, ‘a state of eternal bliss’, but this is subject to several interpretations, as superconscious states may not always be what is meant by *samadhi* in yoga.

A still better description of *samadhi* is given by Paramahansa Satyananda who calls it a state of ‘sublime equanimity’. As expressive of the psychic content of the experience of *samadhi*, this perhaps is the best word which we can use as synonymous with *samadhi*.

Mircea Eliade prefers to translate the word *samadhi* as ‘enstatis, statis, conjunction’. This usage is also current in European literature on yoga.

For the purposes of this essay, however, we will retain the Sanskrit term for its obviously connotative significance.

ii) *Conceptual*: Samadhi is not a metaphysical or a scientific concept. It is rather an experiential fact. It is, therefore, not susceptible to independent conceptual investigation nor to empirical verification. Samadhi is always descriptively explained and no fixed definition is usually offered.

As an experimental fact, it is unverifiable because of its subjectivity and multidimensionality. Therefore, for the purpose of an analytic enquiry, there is no homogeneous data available. One can only rely on external indices generally formulated about the experiences of samadhi.

Difficulties of communication also arise. We can never plumb the depth of psychic processes which are paramount in samadhi. As it is an intensely subjective experience, communication becomes almost impossible, and all efforts at such communication result in incomprehensible utterances, sometimes bordering on the verge of mysticism. Even a saint, who has attained samadhi of any type, will not be able to describe conveniently its meaning to his own being. Although it would not be apt in a different context, Aurobindo comes very near to expressing it when he calls samadhi 'a swoon of being into which ecstasy of divine love casts its soul'.

What is samadhi: a yoga anga

In view of the bewildering mass and variety of descriptions given, it will be advantageous to proceed according to the indices of samadhi as enunciated by Maharishi Patanjali.

Samadhi is a *yoga anga*, a limb of yoga, a member of yoga, but we call it an internal part of ashtanga yoga of Patanjali. Of the angas of yoga, five are described by Patanjali as *bahiranga*, externals of yoga. These are the yama, niyama, asana, pranayama, and pratyahara. Dharana, dhyana and samadhi are the *antaranga*, the final or the supreme elements of yoga. The triad of dharana, dhyana and samadhi is characterized as samyama.

Commentators on Patanjali have usually accepted the division of yogangas into bahir and antar. The five bahirangas of yoga are supposed to be a preparatory discipline, where the quality of effort is merely directed on the efficiency of personality and homogeneity of consciousness. When these are secured to the extent required, a 'take-off' becomes easy and possible.

Samadhi represents the culmination of the process of mental efforts commencing with dharana. An understanding of dharana and dhyana, therefore, is imperative.

a) Dharana

Dharana etymologically means 'to hold fast', from the root *dhṛ*. Patanjali's definition has been translated in several ways (3:1):

Concentration (dharana) is binding the mind to one place.

It has been interpreted as 'fixation of the mind on a single point'. This is literally correct. It has also been rendered as 'holding the mind within a centre of spiritual consciousness in the body or out of it, or fixing it on some divine form, either within or without the body'. Vyasa gives a similar interpretation, "It is fixing of the mind solely through its function, on the navel, on the lotus of the heart, in the brain, the tip of the nose, the tip of the tongue or on external objects." Vijnana Bhikshu also endorses this description of dharana, further supporting it from the *Ishwara Gita*, "In the lotus of the heart or in the navel or at the top of the head – the fixing of the mind to such places constitutes dharana."

How does dharana differ from *ekagrata* which implies the same extent of psychic fixation on a point as dharana? This has been very satisfactorily replied to by Mircea Eliade as follows, "Concentration, dharana, is in fact an ekagrata, a fixing on a single point," but its content is purely notional. In other words, dharana – and this is what distinguishes it from

ekagrata, whose sole purpose is to arrest the psycho-mental flux and ‘fix it on a single point’ – realizes such a fixation for the purpose of ‘comprehension.’

This interpretation is justified by the reference to *desha*, place, in the definition of dharana and the description of *desha* above cited. Dharana is impossible without an object. Mere steadiness of mind without an object on which this steadiness is invested would not constitute dharana.

Such steadiness of mind in order to be meaningful has to have the aim of comprehending the object. As to how far the character of the object comprehended through dharana is notional, is a subject calling for special discussion. Suffice it to say, that dharana is a distinct form of ekagrata and the premises on which an aspirant performs dharana are substantially different from those of an aspirant just practising ekagrata, for the essential difference between the two, as it appears to this writer, is not so much of the character of psychic effort as that of aims sought to be realized through the psychic efforts.

b) Dhyana

Dhyana variously rendered as ‘contemplation’ and ‘meditation’ means, according to Patanjali, an ‘unbroken flow of thought towards the object of concentration’ (3:2):

Uninterrupted stream of the content of consciousness is dhyana.

Jha translates the sutra to read “contemplation consists in the uninterrupted current of cognition there of.” Mircea Eliade’s interpretation of dhyana as a ‘current of unified thought’ is seductively simple, but cannot be said to give the exact connotation of Patanjali’s sutra.

Vyasa interprets the sutra thus, “The uniform flow in that place of the cognition reposing in the object contemplated. That is to say, dhyana is untouched by any other cognition.” Vyasa’s commentary has been better rendered by Mircea Eliade as the “continuum of mental effort to assimilate the

object of meditation, free from any other effort to assimilate other objects.”

Bhoja’s commentary has been translated as follows: “A course of uniform modification of knowledge at that place where no internal organ is fixed in attention by avoiding the otherwise (not uniform) modification of knowledge is called dhyana.”

Vijnana Bhikshu cites *Ishwara Gita* to expound the meaning of dhyana, “The flow of the functions of the thinking principle based upon steadiness in a particular place, and untainted by other functions, is called dhyana by the learned.”

c) Dharana and dhyana

It appears from these commentaries that dhyana involves a continuous, uninterrupted, pure flow of psychic energy towards the object comprehended already in dharana. Dhyana is a logical next step for dharana because uninterrupted assimilation can only follow perfect comprehension.

Dharana can be said to have been consummated when the object thereof is consciously localized, perceived and fully comprehended, whereas dhyana can be said to be accomplished only when the consciousness is assimilated with the object or centre comprehended in dharana.

Another differential usually found between dharana and dhyana is based on the efflux of time. This again is based on a citation of the *Ishwara Gita* by Vijnana Bhikshu, “Dharana lasts as long as twelve pranayamas. Dhyana lasts as long as twelve dharanas, and samadhi lasts as long as twelve dhyanas.”

This has been taken to imply that dhyana is prolonged dharana and samadhi is prolonged dhyana. Nothing can be more fallacious. The duration of samyamas are laid down perhaps from general experience of sadhakas. All that can be said is that this verse represents only one modality of experience and that it is possible for an aspirant to take more time for each than is stipulated here. It must be remembered

that Patanjali has defined dharana, dhyana and samadhi chiefly in terms of the nature and intensity of mental or psychic effort and not in terms of duration.

d) Samadhi

We are now better equipped to understand the meaning of samadhi according to Patanjali. Patanjali's sutra is translated in the following way (3:3):

- i) "The same, enlightening the object alone, and devoid of its own identity as it were, is meditation." (Jha: Vyasabhashya)
- ii) "The same when it arises only about a material substance or object of sense, like a non-existence of itself is samadhi." (Ballantyne: Sastri Deva)
- iii) "When in meditation, the true nature of the object shines forth, not distorted by the mind of the perceiver, that is samadhi." (Isherwood: Prabhavananda)
- iv) Taking help of the definition of savitarka samadhi (1:42) Mircea Eliade generally renders samadhi as follows, "The word is first employed in a gnosiological sense: Samadhi is a state of contemplation in which thought grasps the form of object directly without the help of categories and imagination (*kalpana*), the state in which the object is revealed 'in itself, (*swaroopa*) in its essentials and as if empty of itself."
- v) "When alone the object of contemplation remains and one's own form is annihilated, this is known as identification (samadhi)." (Alain Danielou)
- vi) In Bhoja's commentary we find the following explanation, "The true meaning of this aphorism is this – that knowledge in one shape of contemplation always takes place about the following three, i.e. the material substance, whether it be animate or inanimate, such as a cow, a jar, etc., the term cow, jar, etc., and knowledge itself, but when it takes place only about the material substance and not about the latter two then such knowledge in the shape of contemplation is called samadhi."

Vacaspatimishra, citing a passage of the *Vishnu Purana*, comments that the distinction between act and object of meditation no longer exists in samadhi. Mircea Eliade renders it thus, “There is a real coincidence between knowledge and object of knowledge. The object no longer presents itself to consciousness in the relations that delimit and define it as phenomenon, as it were empty of itself. Illusion and imagination are done away with by samadhi.”

Vijnana Bhikshu’s commentary is equally interesting, “When dhyana becomes free from all idea of the (difference of) dhyana, its object, and the contemplator and subsists in the form of the object of contemplation in its absolute single purity – we have what is called pure samadhi.”

Vijnana Bhikshu adds, “Thus, dhyana is broken up when the senses of an aspirant happen to come into contact with such objects as are extremely revered or liked by the object. But not so in samadhi.” As Mircea Eliade so graphically describes it, “Samadhi is an invulnerable state, completely closed to stimuli.”

It is said in the smriti, “Then in the state of samadhi, having his mind fixed on spirit knows nothing either external or internal – just as the arrow maker having his mind engrossed in the arrow knew not the king passing by his side.”

From these commentaries we can delineate non-controversial features of samadhi and summarize them as follows:

1. Samadhi is the culmination of dharana and dhyana. Samadhi as a direct experience is not possible according to Patanjali.
2. Samadhi differs from dharana and dhyana in that while in the former perfect comprehension of the subject is attained and while in the latter an uninterrupted assimilation of the object is made, in samadhi the dualism between the knower and known disappears with all its modalities. In other words, in the ultimate form of samadhi, pure consciousness prevails and the *chitta vrittis* do not disturb the realm of the mind.

3. Samadhi is the supreme state and the culminating point in the technique of liberation. It leads to ultimate knowledge, *prajna*, thus *avidya*, cosmic ignorance, is destroyed. It also results in *chitta vritti nirodha*, 'blocking the patterns of consciousness'.
4. There are degrees of samadhi. The state of samadhi as a consummation devoutly to be wished for does not come fully grown to a sadhaka, samadhi comes after several stages.

Stages of samadhi

In the 'Samadhi Pada', Patanjali discusses various aspects of samadhi. Whether these form separate classes, types, kinds or forms of samadhi or whether they form various stages of samadhi is a point not entirely free from controversy. This writer feels that there is strong textual evidence in favour of the interpretation which regards these as being aspects or stages of samadhi rather than types or kinds of samadhi. It can be said further that the states in samadhi differ only in degree and not in kind. The ultimate aspect of samadhi is nirvikalpa samadhi and this is reached through a graduated process of *chitta vritti nirodha*. This process is, however, not the same as that involved in dharana and dhyana. It is psychically the same as is experienced in samadhi. This submission will become clearer as we discuss the various aspects of samadhi.

Samprajnata and asamprajnata

The bases of progression towards the supreme samadhi are supplied by two stages samprajnata and asamprajnata.

Vijnana Bhikshu's analysis of these stages of samadhi is lucid and loyal, "Samadhi is of two kinds: conscious and unconscious or abstract, *samprajnata* and *asamprajnata*. Of these two, concrete samadhi is that in which the object of samadhi is properly perceived, that is to say, it is the supercession of all functions of the thinking principle save the one related to the object of samadhi. Abstract samadhi, *asamprajnata*, literally meaning that in which all

consciousness disappears, consists in suppression of all the functions of the thinking principle.”

It is important to note that in this stage of samadhi all mental states vanish, all functions are blocked. There is no trace of chitta vritti save the *samskara*, the residuum left by the past functions of chitta.

Patanjali describes the abstract samadhi in these terms, “The other preceded by the practice of the cause of suspension is that in which the residue remains behind. The objectless cause of suspension is here made the basis of samadhi and this cause is devoid of any material object. Consequently the chitta becomes almost non-existent, immaterial.” Thus is reached the ‘seedless samadhi’.

This asamprajnata samadhi is classified by Patanjali into two kinds: *bhava-pratyaya*, caused by birth, and *upaya-pratyaya*, caused by the means. The upaya-pratyaya is that abstract samadhi which is attained through prescribed means. These means are described in the *Yoga Sutras*, Part I, sutras 1 to 20. They include faith, energy, memory, samadhi and *prajna*, discernment or discrimination.

Vijnana Bhikshu interprets these means as follows:

- i) Love for yoga is *shraddha*, faith.
- ii) The fixation of the mind on one point is energy.
- iii) Remembering is *dhyana*.
- iv) Samadhi is the final part of yoga.
- v) *Prajna* is conscious discernment.

When the above five are employed with great impetuosity and intensity, then follows asamprajnata samadhi and its effect, liberation, *moksha*.

The *bhava-pratyaya* samadhi, although an aspect of asamprajnata samadhi, is not a part of yoga sadhana. It is ‘world-caused and belongs to the ‘disembodied’ and those resolved into nature’ (1:19):

The *videha* and *prakritilaya* yogis have birth as the cause of asamprajnata samadhi. (this is *bhava-pratyaya* asamprajnata samadhi).

This aspect of samadhi is obviously the highest. There is nothing beyond it. Indeed, as an experiential fact this modality explains samadhi more aptly than the one we earlier considered.

The samprajnata samadhi is attained through argumentation, deliberation, joy and egotism. It is obvious that samprajnata samadhi requires a technique as outlined in these four stages and unless it is rigorously followed the consummation of *chitta vritti nirodha* does not result. These stages are described differently also as argumentative, *savitarka*, deliberative, *savichara*, joyous, *ananda*, and egoistic, *asmita*.

In the *Yoga Sutras* (1:42–44), Patanjali himself speaks of savitarka, argumentative; nirvitarka, non-argumentative; savichara, reflective and nirvichara, non-reflective, samadhi.

In that state (of samadhi) on account of alternating consciousness between word, true knowledge and sense perception, the mixed state of mind is known as savitarka samapatti. (1:42)

After the clarification of memory, when the mind is as if devoid of self-awareness and the true knowledge of the object is alone shining within, that is nirvitarka. (1:43)

By this explanation alone savichara samadhi, nirvichara samadhi and subtler stages of samadhi have been explained. (1:44)

Vijnana Bhikshu, commenting on this systematic progression, admits a possibility of order in nirodha. He likens these stages to the steps of a staircase. He also says that the order in which these steps are mentioned is a general one because it is well nigh impossible for the chitta to enter into the extremely subtle state at once. He cites the *smriti* in his support. In the beginning of yoga one ought to contemplate upon the embodied God, thereafter on the bodiless, because when the mind has been well cognizant

with the gross, then alone it is gradually to be led into the subtle.

This order of ascent is, however, not a compulsive order of yoga sadhana. Exceptions in the ascent of consciousness do occur and are not invalid because of their disregard of progressive stages. Vyasa Bhashya, as cited by Vijnana Bhikshu, speaks of persons, “who have attained higher stages, through the special favour of God” and enjoins them ‘not to revert to practices of preceding lower stages.’

A question may well be raised as to how we are to ascertain that God’s favour is with us. The question almost answers itself. It seems that by ‘God’s favour’ is denoted not merely the result of one’s faith in a divine being, but also circumstances so unusual in an aspirant’s progress as may not be explicable by reference to the human universe of discovery. When, therefore, a sadhaka is able to enter easily into any of the four steps of samadhi without undertaking the previous lower stage, he is supposed to be blessed. Accessibility of a particular step to samadhi is quite verifiable because the experimental indices of these steps are clearly formulated. Relentless self-honesty will always help a sadhaka to verify his claims to accessibility of a higher step spontaneously reached with the help of indices of that step specifically formulated in the sutras.

Savitarka samadhi

Patanjali describes this stage of samprajnata samadhi (1:42):

In that state (of samadhi) on account of alternating consciousness between word, true knowledge and sense perception, the mixed state of mind is known as savitarka samapatti.

The most apt rendering of this sutra is Bhoja’s, “This change of the mind into the likeness of what is pondered when mixed up with the fancy of the ‘word’, meaning and knowledge is (technically called) the argumentative.”

Obviously, the savitarka samadhi is a rudimentary stage. Yet commentators have not agreed upon its significance.

Bhoja emphasizes that in this stage we experience undifferentiated or joint perception though the three (word, meaning and knowledge) are really distinct from each other. Prof. Das Gupta sums up the general interpretation when he remarks, "The savitarka stage is that in which the mind becomes one with the thing together with its name and concept and is regarded as the lowest stage, for here the gross object does not appear to the mind in its true reality, but only in a false illusory way, in which it appears in ordinary life associated with the concept and name. The mind here does not become one with the heart of reality, but is only attempting to become steady and is not yet beyond the range of ordinary consciousness."

In Vijnana Bhikshu's analysis, savitaraka samadhi consists in perception by means of dharana and dhyana on the gross or ordinary objects consisting either severally or collectively in the twenty-six tattwas. By the term gross are implied elements as well as sense organs.

Strikingly different, however, are interpretations which rely on the rendering of the word *sankeerna* as meaning 'identification'.

Thus according to Isherwood and Prabhavananda "when the mind achieves identity with a gross object of concentration, mixed with awareness of name, quality and knowledge, this is called savitarka samadhi."

Similarly, Mircea Eliade writes, "In the first stage, savitarka, thought identifies with the object of meditation in its essential wholeness, for an object is composed of a thing, notion and a word and during meditation these three aspects of its reality are in perfect coincidence with the yogi's thought, chitta."

If the chitta really becomes one with or identifies itself with the gross object obviously the object will not appear in its multidimensionality. There cannot be identification unless the object is both visualized and comprehended. The

psychic credentials of this state will be questionable if the identification is with a mass of confused plurality of shapes or unreliable objects (since the word *samadhi* is used to denote a certain cessation of *chitta vritti*).

Therefore, Bhoja's interpretation which insists on undifferentiated perception of an object, whose constituent elements, although distinct, appear mixed up, is more near to be describing the indices of *savitarka samadhi*. There is a vast difference between undifferentiated perception of and identity with the subject. *Nirvitarka samadhi* finds the following description in *Yoga Sutras*, "the non-argumentative is that in which, on the dissolution of memory, the meaning (or object) alone is apparent and which appears as if devoid of its own identity."

After the clarification of memory, when the mind is as if devoid of self-awareness and the true knowledge of the object is alone shining within, that is *nirvitarka*.
(1:43)

Vyasa's commentary gives a full description of this stage. In his preparatory remarks to the aphorism, Vyasa says, "When . . . in the contemplative consciousness, which is free from all notions of verbal conventions as well as from all modifications of knowledge due to valid testimony and inference, there appears the object in its real form, characterized by nothing but this form alone, that condition is called non-argumentative." This is the highest perception and it is the root of valid testimony and inference, both of these arising from it. Such a perception cannot be said to occur in the company of knowledge due to assertion and inference.

In this stage, therefore, the object is no longer known by associations. "It is grasped," as Mircea Eliade so aptly puts, "in its existential nakedness, as a concrete and irreducible datum." Obviously, *savitarka* and *nirvitarka samadhi* differ in essentials. This difference is however best brought out in *Vijnana Bhikshu's* commentary. These stages are called

vitarkanugata stages which follow the vitarka. According to Vijnana Bhikshu, “when the perception of the elements and sense organs . . . as argumentation, vitarka, is accompanied by vikalpa with regard to the word, the object, and the knowledge, then it is called savitarka samadhi, when there is no such process of denotation perceptible, it is called nirvitarka samadhi.”

He then proceeds to explain the meaning of *vikalpa*, fancy. When an agent fancies an identity between i) Hari, the word ii) Hari, the meaning, and iii) Hari, the idea in the mind, there is a vikalpa. When this vikalpa accompanies perception of gross object, savitarka samadhi arises. Conversely, when the gross perception is devoid of this vikalpa it is called nirvitarka or nirvikalpa, the latter meaning not admitting any idea of relation of word and meaning.

Again, the savitarka condition brings inferior perception whereas nirvikalpa results into superior perception devoid of any superfluous imposition. This difference reinforces our submission that savitarka does not bring ‘identification’ as ‘union’ with the object, it being an undifferentiated perception. What is the exact relation between these two states? We may say that:

- i) In both, cognizance of the object is attained.
- ii) In both, the material object is the theme of the psychic odyssey.
- iii) Both are based on ‘complex epistemology and metaphysics of the yoga system’.
- iv) Both are merely stages leading to and not constituting the culminating point of samadhi.

Savichara and nirvichara samadhi

Fixation of the contemplative consciousness on gross objects is not enough. The yogi has to proceed from *bhoota*, element, to *tanmatras*, essence of the elements, from the gross to the subtle. Vichara has been rendered as ‘reflection’ and ‘thought’ or ‘deliberation’. It is the latter term which may usefully be adopted here. Thus the sutra can be rendered

as, “When the object of samadhi is a subtle object two kinds of samadhi called savichara and nirvichara, may be distinguished in the same manner.”

Vijnana Bhikshu gives a very cogent analysis of the term *vichara*, “The perception of subtle existences from nature, *prakriti*, down to the primary elements has been called *vichara*, deliberation. When this perception is accompanied by and interspersed with emanations of each of these subtle existences, in the form of time, space and the like, then it is called deliberative samadhi and when it is without such experience it is non-deliberative.”

Prof. Das Gupta realistically described the experiences of these states as follows, “Things now appear before the mind of the yogi not as a conglomeration of atoms out of diverse tanmatras such as roopa, rasa, etc., under the limitations of time and space and causality and is called the savichara stage. It differs from savitarka stage in that here the objects of concentration are the tanmatras and not the gross bhootas, but this stage is also negated for the formation of the indeterminate tanmatric meditation called nirvichara. The mind here does not feel as in the savitarka stage pleasures, pains or any other characteristic qualities, but it becomes one with it, merged as it were, in the nirvitarka stage with reference to gross objects.”

It is difficult to perceive the psychic significance of these two types of samadhi, unless elementary knowledge of yoga physics and yoga cosmology is presumed. Identification of thought with tanmatras leads to nirvichara samadhi. According to Mircea Eliade, “Thought then becomes one with these infinitesimal nuclei of energy which constitute the true foundation of the physical universe. It is a real descent into the very essence of physical worlds, and not only into qualified and individual phenomena. In fact, perhaps, what is achieved resembles the description of the ultimate aspect of samadhi.”

Sabija and nirbija samadhi

All the stages of samprajnata samadhi are called *bija samadhi*, samadhi with seed, or *salambana samadhi*, samadhi with support. The object contemplated upon gives support to samadhi and hence salambana. Secondly, the bija produces samskaras (residua) and is thus the seed of future experiences.

In contrast to this, the highest form of samadhi is nirbija as described in the *Yoga Sutras* (1:51):

After blocking of even that due to blocking of all chitta vrittis, seedless samadhi is attained.

The concept of the ultimate samadhi is difficult to comprehend, but the nirbija samadhi is said to be reached when even the residua (samskara) of previous states of samadhi are non-existent. This ultimate stage forms a part of nirvikalpa samadhi.

Anandanugata and asmitanugata samadhi

These stages usually are described as following the vicharanugata samadhi, savichara and nirvichara. Anandanugata and asmitanugata stages indicate a more elevated plane in their plain signification, as Prof. Das Gupta has said, “In the anandanugata stage the mind is filled with supreme bliss or happiness, and is in the state of pure being where the self is one with the buddhi . . . In the anandanugata the self has elevated itself from objective meditation and is one with the pure sattwa or blissful aspects of the senses, the perceivers of sensitivity, and this type of samadhi is therefore called grahana vishaya. The asmitanugata is the one where the buddhi turns back to itself and the self being one with the buddhi there is only the steady light of pure being.”

Vijnana Bhikshu’s commentary is most difficult to grasp here. He makes ananda the special object of meditation in the anandanugata samadhi and knowledge of self as that of asmitanugata samadhi.

According to Vijnana Bhikshu, anandanugata samadhi arises when, “with regard to the same object, after the perception of the subtle form, that subtle process of vision is abandoned. Then there arises a peculiar perception in form of pleasure with reference to the souls purpose.”

In asmitanugata samadhi, the perception is in the form of ‘I am other than my body’. The extreme state of this perception is called *dharma megha samadhi*, ‘a cloud of virtue.’ Of asmita, Vijnana Bhikshu recognizes two objects:

1. The human self as discerned from the twenty-four principles;
2. The Supreme Self as discerned from the human self as well as the twenty-four principles.

He cites smriti, “The principle apart from the twenty-four principles, known as the twenty-fifth, the human self, when reduced by the means of right discernment to absolute unity perceives the twenty-sixth, the Supreme Self. Important ontological and epistemological questions arise in this connection also.”





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